

THE  
LIFE OF  
RĀMĀNUJĀCHĀRYA

THE EXPONENT OF THE  
VISIṢṬĀDVĀITA PHILOSOPHY

BY

Ālkondaville Gōvindāchārya

AUTHOR OF

*Bhagavadgita with Rāmadāśja's Commentaries, The Lives  
of the Drāvida Saints, The Divine Wisdom of the  
Drāvida Saints, The Vēdānta and the  
Panchama Question, &c., &c., &c.*



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*His Highness, Sri Krishnaraja Wodeyar Bahadur*

MAHARAJA OF MYSORE



A DEVOUT DISCIPLE

OF

SRI RĀMĀNUJĀCHĀRYA



THE  
LIFE OF RÂMÂNUJA  
AND OTHERS.

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INTRODUCTORY.

After the Âshvârs come the Âchâryâs. The former we have called "Saints," and the latter we shall designate as the "Sages." Both Saints and Sages possess the two-fold characteristics of "Knowledge" and "Love" i.e., Knowledge of God and Love to God. Whereas the Saints are pre-eminently of the order of Lovers of God, the Sages are of the order of Knowers of God. Both Saints and Sages are Servants of God.

We have written the Holy Lives of the Saints already. And now by God's grace, we write the Holy Lives of the Sages. These are headed by the Blessed Nâthamuni(gal), (ranking as the Eighteenth in the *Hierarchic Table* attached to our Lives of the Âshvârs). The substance of the present work is the Life of Râmânnja.

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## CHAPTER I.

### NÂTHAMUNI.

A long time elapsed between the Âshvâra (Saints) and the Âchâryâs (Sages). At the date 916 A.D. or when the Sage Yâmunâchârya was born, Nâthamuni, his grandfather, was alive. We have in record, that Îsvara-bhaṭṭ-Âshvâr was the father of Nâtha-muni; and Îsvara-muni was his (Nâtha-muni's) son. All the three together lived in Viraṇḍârya-puram<sup>1</sup> where exists the Holy Shrine of Mannâr Kôil; the Resident Deity, there manifest, being Mannanâr (= Lord Krishna or Râja-Gopâla).

God so manifest was their household Deity. One day, the father, son (Nâthamuni) and grandson went to the Shrine, and submissively petitioned of Mannanâr to permit them to undertake a pilgrimage to the North of India, where they were anxious to visit all those Holy Shrines to Himself, or at which He had incarnated<sup>2</sup> in various forms, in order to accomplish the threefold object of saving the good, punishing the wicked,

<sup>1</sup> This place is about 15 miles from Obidambaram (Chitrakûṭam and where the famous tank Virâṇḍam (abbr. for Virâṇḍârya-puram) is situate. Sri-raṅga-Nâthamuni is the full name of the Sage.

<sup>2</sup> Much has been written on the subject of Divine Incarnations in the works (1) *Tetras-trays and Rationale of Image Worship* by Pârthasârathi, Yogi (2) *Our Bhagavadgita*, (3) *Lives of Ashvâra*, and (4) *Divine Wisdom of Dvârida Saints*. We again call the attention of our readers to verse II. Loc. IX of our GHâ; and Vishnu-Purâṇa verse दशमोऽध्यायः [v. 1. 51, and v. 9. 23 to 25] and state further that by "Incarnation" we do not mean that God who is everywhere and eternal, changes His place, nor at one moment He is in Heaven, and at another on Earth; nor does He under-

go any change in His essence or substance. Râmânûja has explained this in his preface to GHâ thus:—"He, being the vast Ocean of infinite Mercy and Condescension, Love and Beauty, willed to assume (material) forms similar to those of His creatures, without abandoning His own essential divine (immaterial) nature [Ep: 2-9.] The same that we say of our Lords Matsya, Krishna, &c., the Christians say of Lord Jesus Christ. "We can no more" say they, "gaze upon His ineffable brightness than we can look upon the noon-day sun. Then God in His boundless Mercy shrouded his brightness in the clouds of human nature—veiled His face, so that through the veil of human flesh, human deeds and human words, we might look upon God and live." [Epiphany. P. 6, Jan: 10th 1903].

and establishing virtue in the land (*vide* Bhagavad-Gītā. IV-8),—such Shrines as Mathura, Gokula, Brindāvana, the Holy banks of Yamuna (Jumna), Gôvardhana, Dvāraka, Ayôdhya, Sâlagrâma, Badarikâshrama, Naimizâranya, Nrisimha-giri and others.

Lord Mannanâr deigned to give them permission to do so. They started forthwith with their families, and in the course of their holy peregrinations, they came upon a place called Gôvardhana-pura, situate on the banks of Holy Yamuna, and there paid their homage to Lord Krishna, known to the Dravidians as *Yamunai-t-taraiyan* [*vide Tiruppâvai* by St. Âpdâl v. 5]. The Lord and all the surroundings were so fascinating as to induce them to decide to spend the rest of their days here. Time agreeably sped thus. But on a certain night, Sage Nâthamuni had a dream in which Lord Mannanâr appeared and commanded his devotee to return to Vira-Nârâyana.

The Sage was vividly impressed by this experience, and resolved to return to his Native Land. He accordingly submitted his desire to Yamunai-t-taraiyan, who gladly accorded his sanction and honored the sage with the Holy *tirtha* and *prâddâ*.

Bidding adieu to the place, they bent their steps to the Purushôttama-Kshêtra, where Lord Jagannâtha is resident. After paying reverence to the Lord here, they next went on to Simbâdri or Ahôbilam where Lord Nrisimha sheddeth his saving radiance around, and thence they pursued their journey, till they arrived at the Sacred Hill of Tirupati, celebrated as the abode of Lord Śrinivâsa,—the abode on this earth which He is said to have particularly chosen as His centre for the salvation of mankind, after having alighted thereon from His celestial abode Śrī Vaikuntha, or what is called Paramapada, Param-Âkâṣa, &c. This locality again was so prepossessing that it bid Nâthamuni to dwell there permanently; but Mannanâr's commands imperiously required his return home. The Sage could not resist this; and so left the Holy Tirupati,

and en route visited, among others, the holy spots known as Ghaṭikāchala (of Lord Nṛsiṃha), Hastigiri (or Kanchi of Lord Varada-Rāja), Tiruvahindra-pura (—near modern Cuddalore—of Lord Déva-Nāyaka), Tirukkōvalūr (of Lord Trivikrama), Śīrangam (of Lord Ranganātha), Tirukkudandai (—or Kumbhakōnam—of Lord Āra-v-amuda or Sāraṅgapāṇi); and finally returned to his native place Vira-Nārāyaṇapuram. Here the sage received an ovation from the holy inhabitants, and was conducted in procession to Mannanār. The Lord was highly pleased and made His wishes known to the assembled community that thenceforward, they must look upon the Sage as His specially blessed devotee, provide him with suitable lodgings, and all other necessities of life; and take such other care of him as his favourite deserved. All this they gladly did. And Nāthamuni(gal) made a flower-garden for the Lord, and employed himself in its care, serving the Lord with the offerings of garlands, scents, lights; and in suchwise usefully spent his time in the company of wise and holy men, in the cultivation of Divine Knowledge and its propagation.

One day, there came a party of Śrī-vaishnavās from the uplands (or the table-lands to the north of Trichinopoly), to visit Mannanār, and they were heard to sing the sacred Hymn, “Āra-v-amuda” or the Decad: V-8 of Śrī. Nammāshvār’s Tiruvāy-Mozhi, and ending with the 11th verse of the same, in which it is said: “*This Ten out of the Thousand, sung by Kurugār Saṅkṣēper.*” Nāthamuni, hearing this, begged of the visitor to repeat the “One Thousand.” But they said they only knew this fragment of Ten and no more. On being again asked whether any one else knew the same, or whether there were written records preserved of the same, they confessed that they knew nothing whatever of it. The sage dismissed them with the usual holy Tīrths and Prāsāda from Mannanār.

Nātha was anxious to trace out the rest of the Prabandha (the Drāvīda Hymns of the Saints are so called); and surmised that they might in all likelihood prove recoverable in the Kucaga Land (=Āshvār Tirunagari near Tinnevely). He



travelled south to this place, and paid due honors to St. Nammāshvār, and Lord Polinda-ninra-Pirān (or Ādinātha) and set about inquiring for the missing Prabandha. He met Parāṅkuṣa Dāsar, a disciple of Madhurakavi(gal)<sup>1</sup>; and asked him for information. He said:—‘Sire! Not only the Tīruvāy-Mozhi of St. Nammāshvār but the Prabandhas as well of the other Āshvāra have almost been forgotten, as a very long time has elapsed since the days of their composition. My Āchārya, St. Madhurakavi(gal), has left this message that whosoever will concentrate his mind, fixing himself in a Yoga-posture before St. Nammāshvār’s (Holy Image) and repeat the ten-versed Hymn, the Kaṇṇinūṣ-Śiruttāmbu, twelve thousand times, all the time devoutly dwelling on the Holy feet of the Saint, will place himself *en rapport* with the Saint, who will then bless the devotee with the vision of himself.

Nāthamuni was rejoiced to hear this. He fell at the feet of Parāṅkuṣa-Dāsar and implored him to teach the (Mantra-like) Kaṇṇinūṣ-Śiruttāmbu. Dāsar finding Nāthamuni a fit soul for the communication, taught him this Decad; and Nāthamuni with due preparation and in all austerity, sat down in meditation for the term required, and duly invoked Nammāshvār by the twelve thousand-times-repeated Mantra, as enjoined.

Entitled as he was to an extraordinary revelation, by the qualifications he possessed of a true disciple, *vis.* “Faith, virtue, devotion to God, serenity, wisdom and courage<sup>2</sup>”, Śrī, the Universal Lady of Mercy, commanded St. Nammāshvār to appear to Nāthamuni. As if a voice came from Heaven, the holy Image of the Saint opened its mouth and asked Nāthamuni the object of his invocation. Nāthamuni submitted to him his prayer: to recover the lost knowledge of the Prabandha. Thereon the Saint was pleased to dictate to him—*i.e.*, present to his spiritually opened sight, like the sight Lord

<sup>1</sup> See his life in our *Holy Lives of the Āshvāra*.

<sup>2</sup> आसित्तो धर्मसहितः शक्तिव्याप्तैश्वर्यशक्तिः । सम्प्रीकृतो धीरशिव इत्यभिधीयते ॥  
[Fāchārāṭra]

Krishṇa gave to Arjuna<sup>1</sup>—the Holy Tiruvāy-Mozhi of 1000 verses, as well as the 3000 verses of Hymns sung by the other saints who appeared before and after St. Nammāzhvār; and in addition taught him the holy Doctrine of the Three Rahaśyās [Vide P. xxi-xxii of Intro: to Lives of Āzhvārs], as well as the secrets of Yoga (or the physio-psychological way of approaching God.)<sup>2</sup>

Nāthamuni(gal) felt himself blessed; and remained in Tirunagari absorbed in the services of Āzhvār and Ādinātha. But lord Mannanār again appeared to him in a dream, which was to the effect that what Nāthamuni(gal) learnt should be rehearsed before him. He communicated the dream to Lord Ādinātha and Āzhvār, whereupon he was permitted to return to his native place and was further enjoined to spread the instruction he had received, among such Śrivaishnavās as were fitted by their spiritual character, viz., virtues such as *sama* and *dama* (or conquest of the senses and the mind).

Nāthamuni(gal) bent his steps homewards and on the way visited many Holy Shrines and learnt much of the traditional lore connected with them, and finally reached Viranārayanapuram. Here he went to Lord Mannanār and as commanded in the dream duly recited all the Prabandhās, he had now received, before Him.

The Lord after thus giving audience to Nātha thought to Himself thus:—"That the souls may have life, We provided them with bodies and senses; We gave them Śāstras to guide them in the right direction; We ourselves often took upon Us flesh (incarnations); and yet Our work (of wholesale salvation) remains incomplete. The Prabandhās of the Āzhvārs are a valuable means by which to effect this regeneration. They

<sup>1</sup> [Bh: Gītā. XI]

दिव्यं ददामि ते चतुः परमं योगमैश्वरम्  
Divine knowledge is thus often  
lost and often recovered.

Cp: Bh: Gīt: IV-1 to 3. Also  
Vēdas are often lost, recovered, or  
revealed again and again:—

युगान्तेऽर्हन्ति तान् वेदान्तेतिहासम् महर्षयः॥

<sup>2</sup> See note on Yoga further on.

therefore ought never again to be allowed to fall out of use. So thinking, He commanded Nâthamuni(gal) to set them to music and in this manner disseminate Holy Knowledge.

In obedience to this command, Nâthamuni(gal) set the Holy Prabandhās to music: *celestial* music, it is written with the help of his nephews Kizhai-akatt-Âshvân and Mōlai-akatt-Âshvân; and the Prabandhās being now like the Vêdās, associated with the three fold intonation of *Udâtta*, *Anudâtta* and *Svarita*, spread from that time onwards far and wide in the land.

King Chōla is said to have ruled in those days in a place called Gangai-konda-chōla-puram, when two courtesans came to him. One could sing according to the mode called *dēva-gāna* (celestial mode), the other according to the mode called *manushya-gāna* (human mode). Each thought she excelled the other; and the object of their approaching the king was to have the dispute settled between them as to who actually was the better. The king ordered a council to meet, before which the singers were made to perform their parts. The dispute was decided in favour of the *manushya-gāna*; and rich presents were bestowed on that performer, while the other was considered to have failed.

The lady of the *dēva-gāna* thought thus:—"My method of singing, these manlings cannot appreciate, and I shall consecrate the same therefore to the *dēvās* (celestial beings)." So she went from one Holy Shrine to another, everywhere displaying her art to the Deity therein manifest. She in due course reached Vira-nārāyanapuram and as was customary with her she went to the Shrine of Mannanār and there sang her song in the audience of our sage Nâthamuni(gal). He heard and understood her mode, and mightily pleased, vouchsafed to her as a mark of his appreciation, the *tirika* and *prasāda* of Lord Mannanār. She now purposely retraced her steps to king Chōla and spoke thus:—"There is one soul, at least, O King, who can understand the beauties of my *dēva-gāna*. He

is by name Nāthamam(gal), the blessed votary of Lord Maṇḍār at Vira-aṅṛāyaṇapuram "

The king's curiosity was roused. He sent messengers to Nāthamam(gal), begging him to deign to visit his court. He on his side, on receiving the invitation, thought thus — " We have set the Blessed Prabaṇḍhās to enquire music. Let us visit the king's court, and take this opportunity of making these known to the world " Thus he directed his steps to the king's court. On his arrival, the king rose and welcoming the Sage with every mark of honor, offered him a suitable seat. Whereon the Sage blessed the king, and inquired as to his object in inviting him. The king said — " Holy Sage ! canst thou distinguish between the *dēva-gāna* and the *manuṣya-gāna* of these minstrels ? " The Sage then requested that the performance be given before him. When this was done, he addressed the king thus — " Ye men have ears for the *manuṣya-gāna* only. Only the *Dēvas* can understand the other. " " But ", the king respectfully asked, " how, Sir, can we be made to hear it ? " Thereon the Sage directed that the 400 kinds of *tāla* (rhythm) be marked, and explained to the king the rate of each. The king understood from the explanation the regular harmonical progression and symphony which this method lent to the *dēva-gāna* music, which produced in him a bliss never before experienced. It is also related that a pair of cymbals was placed near a consecrated post, and the *dēva-gāna* was sung, when it was found that the post began to melt. They stopped the music, and when they attempted to lift the cymbals, they stuck to the post, and when they began the music and lifted them, they came off. The king went into raptures over this, and falling at the feet of the Sage proposed to reward him abundantly. But the Sage, to whom even the offer of Lordship over Worlds was no temptation, politely declined the presents offered, and blessing the king, returned to Vira-aṅṛāyaṇapuram.

Eight disciples had our Sage :—(1) Uyyakkonḍār, (2) Karukū-k-kāval-appa, (3) Nambī Karupākara Dēvar, (4) Ēra-tira-vadaiyār, (5) Tira-k-kapṇa-maṅḡḷa-āṇḍā, (6) Vāṇa-māmalai Dēvi-y-āṇḍā, (7) Uru-p-pattār-Aṇḍā-pillai, and

(8) *Sekatiūr-Āshvān*. They were disciples of the description given in *Jaya-Samhita* (of *Pāñcharātra*)

"He indeed is a true disciple  
Who owns, sole for the Guru's sake,  
All riches—all wisdom—  
All works—his body itself!"

Such deserving disciples then, *Nāthāmuni(gal)* initiated into all the Holy Mysteries of Religion, taught them the *Divya-Prabandhā*, and left a legacy of works, like the *Poruṣa-nirpaya*, and *Nyaya-tatva* treating of Sublime Truths of Religion, beginning with God, the Lord of the Kosmos, and also a work on *Yōga* (or the art of communion with God), called the *Yōga-rakasya*. He himself retired from active habits of life and became immersed in the contemplation of the Blessed Deity fixing His resplendent Form ever before his mental gaze.

This *samādhi* state of the Sage came to be known to the outside world and finally reached the ears of King *Chōla*. To see the wonderful Sage and pay homage to Lord *Maṇḍanār* as well, he left his capital and, accompanied by his consorts, reached *Vira-Nārāyaṇa-puram*. There he saw *Nāthāmuni(gal)* absorbed in *Yōga* (meditation) and, lost in respect and wonder at this unusual sight, was quietly retracing his steps. But the sage took them for Lord *Kṛishṇa* and His Holy Consorts, that they had been pleased to visit him. Thus fancying in his delirium of *Yōga*, he ran after them. *Cyyakkondār* and others, his disciples, observing this divine hallucination, pursued the Sage and meeting him at *Gangai-konda-Chōḍhapuram* brought an explanation from him as to the apparently insane nature of his conduct. He told them that in his eyes, they appeared as Lord *Kṛishṇa* and His Consorts and this vision threw him into a frenzy of love. The disciples reminded him that service to God and the Godly were the highest aim, and that when this demanded waking life on his part, he was not to allow himself to be entrained in this manner to the prejudice of such service. He came to himself and returned to his Divine Service at Lord *Maṇḍanār's*.

Matters went on thus for a certain length of time, and the Sage became more and more absorbed in his illumination. On a certain day he called in his disciple Kurugai-k-kâval Appai, and commanded him to learn the *Aspîśānta* Yoga<sup>1</sup>, and taught him the same.

The Sage now called his other intimate disciple Uyyak-konâr and asked him also to practice the Yôga method. But he humbly answered the Sage "Holy Sir, while I still carry the corpse with me, how is marriage possible?" It will be time for me to consider the matter when I am about to give up my body." "Then" said the Sage, "employ thyself in the dissemination of the Sâstras and the Prabhândâs."

<sup>1</sup> This Yôga is not on the lines of the Y-oga as taught by Patanjali, inasmuch as the latter is regarded as an Vedic or the Brahma Sûtra — "Sâma Yoga prapattiḥ."

[11] 3) and inasmuch as it postulates God as but the centre of the Universe thus detracting from the own presence of the God head. And at the same time looking upon God as but the Means of procuring Karma, or realization of one's own soul, not as the End itself to be aspired after. The True Eight Limbed Yôga of the God aspirant (1-16) is described in Ep. 1.9.12) of the 1st Volume of the Bhagavad Gâthya, Telugu Edition. 1871 Madras, but we are subject here on an abstract of the same: The Eight are (1) Yama, (2) niyama, (3) dhâra, (4) prânâpâna, (5) pratyâhâra, (6) dhîrâna, (7) âlâsâna, (8) samâhâri. The lower four are external processes, the upper three are internal; (1) and (2) are as described in the Vishnu parâśa VI, 7—Celibacy or continence; Harmlessness; Truthfulness; Non-covetousness; Non-acceptance of gifts; Scripture-reading. Purity (outer and inner), Contentment. Asceticism (such as fasting), Inclining the mind to God, (3) to Postures (Asana) described

as Padmâsana &c., which help to produce comfort, attention and steadiness of mind, [as described by Vasistha and others]. (4) is the regulation of breath (Prânâpâna) divided into Rechaka, Pârâka and Kumbhaka (as described in the Yâgy parâśa). These processes help to steady the wandering mind. (5) is Sense conquest (Pratyâhâra), or making the senses obey the mind, not the mind the senses, as described by Parâśara [Vishnu-Pa. VI, 7]. (6) is fixing (Dhâraṇa) the mind on the Para Form of God (as described by Śaṅkara). (7) is concentration, (Dhîrâna) or the sustained nature of the mind on one subject, [as described in Vishnu Pa. VI 7 9]. And this is of five kinds. (8) is absorption or immersion (Samâhâri), or realization of God (as described in Vishnu-Pa. VI, 7, 12).

<sup>2</sup> Marriage means Union (i.e. Yôga) with God. This is not possible as long as the body hangs on the soul like a corpse. The God-ward always look on the body as a detestable corpse to be cast away as soon as possible. Read, "May kundaṁkita varambuvare, &c." (4th Tiru-môḍi, verse 75).

The Sage now called his son Īṣvara-Muni and said: "Son, thou shalt have a son. The name 'Yamunai-t-turaiyar', thou shalt give him." And he commanded his disciples Uyyakkondār and K. Appan to communicate in due course to this would-be son, all the knowledge of the Śāstras and the Yōga he had imparted to them. Leaving his instructions thus, he resumed his Yōga.

Time passed. King Chola had gone out into the country with his followers on a hunting excursion, and he happened to pass by Viranārāraṇapuram on his journey back. Our Sage's young daughter watched the grand cortege, with bows arrows, female attendants monkeys and what not. But to her it all seemed like a vision, which, running up to her father, she described as if two men with bows, a woman and a monkey called at his place and inquired for Nāthamuni(gal) and went their way. And our Sage at once construed this (in his Divine-filled imagination) as if Lord Rāma himself, with His brother Lakshmana following Him with bows and arrows (as His body-guard), with Queen Sītā between them, condescended to visit him, as described in Rāmāyaṇa [III. II] :—

"Rāma went foremost of the three,  
Next Sītā followed, fair to see,  
And Lakshman with his bow in hand  
Walked hindmost of the little band."

Forthwith he started from his Yōga-seat and went in search of this Holy Band, and asking those whom he met on the way, for traces of their journey. They said: "Go this way, go this way," evidently fancying that he was in search of the king and his retinue. He increased his speed and arrived in the vicinity of Gangaikonda-S-puram; and asking the residents there to direct him further on the way where the Holy Band went, they said they had not seen any. He looked farward and far out and sideways, and seeing nothing of what

his heart yearned for, heaved a deep sigh, wept and swooning away, fell on the ground and departed from this world.

परन्तु नैश्वर्यलोकं निन्दनन्दं मुञ्जामहम् ।  
 तत्र संवाहिनीदिव्या विरजावन्दसे भगवन् ॥  
 सर्वे हिरण्यपास्तत्र सर्वे कंदमयानुभा ॥  
 अशकृतमयानिन्याः पुनराकृतिं कर्हिताः ॥  
 एकान्तितमस्तदाभ्यासयोगिनो हि मे ।  
 तेषां तत्परमं स्थानं यद्वै परमं तत् सूरयः ॥

The disciples and the son, of our Heaven-departed Sage, received the tidings of this extraordinary translation and could not bear the pain of separation, but fate must be submitted to by all. So they travelled to where the Sage was lying in state, and after prostrating themselves before the dead body, duly cremated him according to the *Brahma-medha* ritual prescribed in the Vedas. Returning home, all the rest of the ceremonies were duly performed by Īṣvaramuṇi(gal), the son. And Karaḡāval Appan selected a place near where his Master was accustomed to sit in Yoga, and steadily practised Yoga. The Sage is said to have lived 540 years.<sup>1</sup>

The memorial verse to him runs thus

व्योम-भारस्तत्कविर्धं समेत्य लक्ष्म्या नियोगात् कुण्डलाधिराज ।  
 समं परत्नद्वयमादयत्यै नाशाय तस्मै मुनये नमास्तु ॥

<sup>1</sup> Adam lived 980 years and so on. Read the Chronological index to the Old Testament. See *Genesis* V. 5.



## CHAPTER II

## UYYAKKONDĀR AND MAṆAKKĀL-NAMBĪ.

Uyyakkondār is the same as Pandarikākṣa(r). Uyyakkondār is a name which has an interesting story connected with it. Once on an occasion, Vanga-puratt-Ācchi, the father-in-law of Nāthamuni(gal), sent a request to his son-in-law to send his wife (i.e., Ācchi's daughter), Aravinda-Pārai, on a visit. Nāthamuni(gal) sent her, escorted by Pandarikākṣa(r), his trusted disciple. Some of the dependents of Ācchi looked down upon him as of an inferior caste, he being a *pārva-sikṣī* (that is, of that class among Brāhmins, whose custom is to wear a tuft of hair right on the crown of the head), and therefore they fed him on stale food. But he never resented this treatment. He, on the other hand, considered it as the greatest blessing that was conferred upon him. He returned home, and pressed by Nāthamuni(gal) to narrate all that took place at Ācchi's residence, related with joy the happiness he derived from eating stale food; when asked how it could be so, he answered that it was certainly so on the principle explained by St. Tondaradippodi-Āzhvār,—

“If but their broken bread the saints will grant  
Indeed it shall my nature purify.”

[Tirumālai, verse 41.]

On hearing this, Nāthamuni(gal) embraced his disciple and exclaimed “Thou art my saviour.” Thus Uyyakkondār means he who practised the highest precepts of religion taught by his Master.

Such was Uyyakkondār or Pandarikākṣa. He had many disciples under him with whom he was happily engaged in the delightful study and exposition of the Utterances of the

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<sup>1</sup> Born at Tiruvallur, A.C. 826, Vide No. 19. Hierarchie Table, in our *Lives of Saints*.

Holy Āshvār. The chief of these disciples were five, viz., (1) Manakkāl Nambi, (2) Tiruvallikkēṇi Pāṇperumāl Arayar, (3) Sottai-p-pūṭi-Sandalakūrar, (4) Sri Pandarika-dāsan, and (5) Ulagu-perumāl Nangu. Of these disciples, Manakkāl-Nambi or Sri Rāma-miṭra(r) was the greatest, inasmuch as he bore to his Guru (Uyyakkondār) the relation of Lakshmana to his Master and Brother Sri Ramachandra<sup>1</sup>. This was so much the case that when the Guru's wife Āṇḍāmma died, Rāma-miṭra did all the menial services that thus necessarily devolved on him in the household of the Guru. In illustration of this implicit servitude to his master, it is recorded that on a certain occasion, he accompanied the two daughters of his Guru on pūṭimage to a bathing place. They were returning and the damsels shrank at a small stream in their path, because it was sloughy. Rāma-miṭra saw the situation and immediately coming to their rescue, stretched himself at length across the channel, and let them walk over on his back! The Guru heard this incident, and drawing the disciple to him with exclamations of joy, touched his head with his feet—a favour not bestowed on all indiscriminately. "Is there any thing more that I can do to thee?" further asked the Guru. "What more can I ask," said the disciple, "than that, having already attained my highest ambition, viz., that of serving at your Holy Feet, this service should be continued to me for ever"? Uyyakkondār was overcome with this exemplary attitude and in his irrepressible wish to do to his disciple the highest good, commended to him once more for meditation the Draya-Mantra<sup>2</sup>, the efficacy of which has been described thus in the Pāñcharātra:—

अतिशयानन्दवान् मानसतन्त्रकाङ्क्षन् ।

सर्वकार्यविज्ञानं सर्वज्ञाकार्यदर्शनम् ॥

मानसं प्रविशैषान् कामकर्मविधाकृतम् ।

इत्येकमर्थमोक्षाय नान्यथाति सुविश्लिखन् ॥

<sup>1</sup> सर्वकार्यविज्ञानं आभ्यस्तव्यमकरो । [Rāmāyaṇa.]

<sup>2</sup> Vide page xxi. Introd. to The Holy Lives of the Āshvār.

Uyyakkondār's sojourn in this earth was now approaching its end and Rāma-miśra(r)<sup>1</sup>, reverently broached to him the subject of who after him was to bear the apostleship for their *Blessed Dispensation*. "Well, my son," said he, "I had hoped to carry out myself the behests of my Holy Master Nāthamuni(gal), communicated to me when he was passing away, viz., to expect the arrival of a grandson for him, (i.e., son to Īṣvara-muni(gal)), to whom to impart all the Mysteries of our Faith, naming him Yamunai-t-tiraiyar, as my Guru willed, but Providence has willed it otherwise. This duty therefore devolves on thee, the next and my most trusted disciple, and thou therefore wilt bequeath our mysteries to posterity in the Holy *Śoṭa* line of descent." So delivering the message, Uyyakkondār left his body, seating himself in the *Padmāsana* posture, and uniting his heart with the Holy feet of his Āchārya, Śrī Nāthamuni(gal).

Neither Rāma-miśra(r), nor his brethren, could bear this pang of separation, but gradually they recovered and girded themselves to carry out the last services and sacraments for the departed, which they did with all due ceremony and solemnity. The memorial verse dedicated to him on the occasion is thus recorded :—

नमःपद्मजदेवस्य नाथर्शिरादपद्मजे ।

स्यस्तस्मैमहात्म्यं कुलनाथायधीयते ॥

Rāma-miśra was now, with his disciples, engaged in the work of furthering his holy mission, all the time in eager expectation of the hoped-for holy son to be born to Īṣvara-muni(gal). This happy event came about in the month of *Āḍi* under the asterisk *Uṭtarāḍi*. Joy overspread their countenances, and they forthwith went about administering to the child all the sacraments fit for the occasion, through the medium of the father, ending by naming the child Yamunai-t-tiraiyar (according to the wishes of Nāthamuni) and observing all the

<sup>1</sup> Vide No. 20, Hierarchic Table to our Lives of Āchāryas.

needful preliminaries prescribed for the Vamśhaves according to the Pāñcharātra text.—

देवदेवेभ्यो नमः कुमारीकर्मनामिणे ।  
 भक्तवत्सलकर्मैतु मन्त्रेण चारुतम् ॥  
 बुद्धिहस्तमिविदिष्य ज्ञेयवत्पदहाकरम् ।  
 चैतन्यकौल्यतप्यभारेण चैव पयसाहवम् ॥

Who was this holy child, but Yāmunāchārya<sup>1</sup> (the Sanskrit synonym), Ālavandār (the Tamil name), the famous forerunner of Śrī Rāmānuja, who was to come<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> We were much amused to read in Śrīrāma Dayānanda Sarasvatī's *Satyārtha-Prakāśa*, Yāmunāchārya transmuted into Yāmunāchārya who—it is farther naively added, is "born of a Greek or Moslem family"<sup>1</sup> [Vide p. 82, English translation by Durga Prasad of Lahore, 1900]. And again in page 73, it is written—"The first teacher of this faith (Vaiṣṇavism) was Sathakōpa, who according to the Bhaktamālā written by Nabhā, was of the Doon (low caste) tribe. For, it says that the Yogi Sathakōpa used to make and sell winnowing fans (विन्नीयकम् विचकारकम्), that is to say he was born of the tribe of Kanjar. When he had wanted to read with the Brahmins or to hear their Scriptures, they must have treated him with con-

tempt. He then might have coined new things against the Brahmins and their Scriptures such as the forehead mark, centerising the forearms with the discus, &c. His disciple was Monibhāsa, born of a Chaudal or low caste family. He had a disciple, named Yāvanāchārya, born of a Moslem or Greek family. But his name was changed to Yāmunāchārya." Our readers have only to read the *Lives of Āchāryas* written by us and this life of Yāmunā, and then he may more than smile at the ridiculous account given by Dayānanda.

<sup>2</sup> This is very much parallel to John the Baptist preceding Jesus. Vide No. 21 Hierarchic Table in our *Lives of Āchāryas*. Born 916 A. C. at Kappangala, one mile from Kāṭamannār-koṭṭi.

## CHAPTER III.

## ĀLAVANDĀR.

Such was the advent of Ālavandār, which had been foreseen by his predecessors, — an advent destined to inaugurate a system of thought which was thenceforward to grow, amplify and vivify the nascent religious sense in man. Ālavandār signified literally "He who has come to reign" i.e., to reign in a system of religious thought, which was to glow in man's heart uplifting him to God in love.

Duly were performed, as he grew, the sacred rites of *anṣa-prāṇaṇa*, *chanda* and *upanayana*, and the life of the student began in earnest. Ālavandār would attend the school for a day and stay away at home. Questioned by his fellow students as to the cause of his absence, he would tell them "Ye are learning the same things again and again." Questioned by his parents, he would say "They are reading the same thing over and over, but I have learnt it all already." A precociously clever boy thus, Ālavandār was, and he was excused regular attendance at school. He finished his student's career rapidly, and the next stage of life, wedlock, was duly entered into. By this time the end of Īśvara-muni(gal) drew near, and he bid farewell to all with the consoling reflection of having left a model son for the service of the world. The poble son had all the sacramental routine for his departed parent strictly gone through, and now set out to fulfil his own vocation.

Grammar, logic, philosophy and allied subjects were taken up. And he studied them assiduously under Mahā-bhāṣya-bhaṭṭa. There was at this time an Ākṣi-y-āshvān, residing in the court of the monarch of the country as Pandit and royal chaplain. He was thus, in his own opinion, the head of all the literary men in the country, from whom he assessed tributes as a recognition of his suzerainty. The tribute was *dasabandham* or one-tenth of the income of each learned man. A demand for this was sent out to M-bhaṭṭa, who thereon was troubled in mind. On Ālavandār inquiring and being told all the circumstances of Bhaṭṭa's discomfiture, he received the demand-notice and

ture it into pieces in the presence of the royal messengers who had conveyed it. They returned and narrated the occurrence to Ākki, who again sent men to Bhatta to know whether it was a new poet or a man of letters, who had dared so to affront him. Ālavandār again interfered between his teacher and the men and sent them back with the answer

“ नवर्षकवयस्तुकेषां नवर्षकेस्तत्तत्प्रसादा ।

अनितुलितवदित्वादिपकटादपि निपाटयन्मया ॥”

Ākki had felt his pride already piqued and now the second message set him aflame with rage. “Is there a scholar to oppose me?” cried he frantically, and appealed to his king for protection and redress against the insult he had received. It was not Mahābhāṣya Bhatta, but an insolent boy of his party, who had thus insulted him,—was of course the report of the men. The king now despatched some messengers with a written command to the boy to come to his presence, but the proud boy as unceremoniously destroyed the royal mandate, and let the messengers depart. The king was duly told of the indignity so offered. He reflected a moment and thought to himself that it must be no ordinary person who could command courage to slight even royalty; he would therefore send envoys with escort and letters—a formal invitation—to the extraordinary boy to come and grace the royal court with his august presence. This was appropriate to him, and so the boy accepted the invitation and arriving, alighted in the royal hall of audience with all honors paid. All assembled to receive the curious visitor. Ākki of course was present to witness the prodigy, of a boy come in this style, and feverishly fearing what the next event would prove to be. His fears were well founded however, for it was like a bomb bursting before him, when a scrap of paper was thrown by the distinguished visitor before the royal pandit. It was at once a gauntlet and challenge. The scrap contained this famous verse

शरैर्नापरिकल्प्यपरमकिल्लकम्पात धाद्योपकमत्र

एवमेनीति शीतायुक्ककल मयुक्तमेतेषां प्रेतो ।

काच शम्भुपतीत्यदिनिधिरुपकमर्कचम्पुवनेन

स्वीयसाकल्यवपुःनयनविमलवरा नृपतः कदाहोऽय ॥

‘Find, if you will, than me a second soul,  
 Who wots entire all Vedic dogmatics,  
 In all the stretch from Um(ā)-tread Himālay,  
 To Rāma’s bridge—the joy of Sītā’s soul  
 Or East to West, which mountain ranges bound,  
 With sun and moon in turn, their crests adorning’

On reading this, Ākki’s wrath grew turning to the king—  
 “My royal patron!”, implored he, “permit me to argue this  
 boy out of his intolerable vanity, and crush him before ye all.”  
 The king gently asked the boy if he was capable of standing a  
 combat such as his pandit would give. “Most certainly, your  
 Majesty! give me leave,” answered he, “but you will not be  
 capable of judging between us and deciding as between the  
 winner and the loser; nor can we own to you our mutual victory  
 or defeat. Appoint, pray, judges versed in the matters of  
 our contention.” “Well said,” agreed the king and selected  
 fit umpires to adjudge the issues of the intellectual contest  
 pending. It was an unparalleled and exciting scene. And so  
 the king and his consort both took their seats to watch the  
 interesting proceedings.

The queen saw the boy and with her keen insight and  
 penetration decided to herself that he was going to be the  
 victor. “My lord! she said, addressing the king, “if this boy  
 wins not, throw me to the dogs.” “If he wins,” exclaimed the  
 king in his turn, “I will part with half my kingdom for him.”

Anon, Ākki spoke “Vain stripling! No drawn contest  
 between us is needed. A mere trick suffices to put thee down  
 before this august assembly, “witness ye all!” he said to  
 the assembly, and turning to Ālavandār said “if thou, proud  
 boy, shouldst say ‘yes’ in any matter, I will prove the ‘no’  
 of it, and vice versa, ‘yes’ to thy ‘no’, and the winner in the  
 end shall touch the head of the loser with his foot.”  
 “Agreed,” promptly retorted Ālavandār; and without further  
 ado, made three short statements and challenged Ākki to

negative them if he could. Listen, proud pedant, to these and disprove if thou canst:—

- (1) त्वमाता न वन्ध्या = = Thy mother is not a barren woman  
 (2) राजा सर्वभूष = = This king is paramount.  
 (3) राजपत्नी पतिव्रता = = This queen is a good wife.

Ākki was simply stupefied, as he could not dare to disprove these facts; and therefore kept helplessly silent.

They now entered the arena of literary debates, and here also Ākki was beaten. Ālavandār addressing his opponent said —“As for the victor touching the head of his victim, O Pandit!—for that was our agreement—I shall desist from so base an act, though agreed to by thyself and in consideration of thy grey hairs and thy eminent status as Gura in the Royal household.” On hearing this declaration, the learned assembly applauded Ālavandār’s attainments and noble demeanour and worshipped him with the honors of a *Brahma-rakha* (i. e. a triumphal procession, &c.)

The Queen was overjoyed to find that her insight had not belied her as to the results of the combat and drawing the conqueror-hero to her breast exclaimed:—“*Yenai Ālavandāro i. e.* ‘Didst thou come to fulfil me’? *Ālavandār* thus means “He who came to fulfil” i. e., (1) fulfil his spiritual mission on earth, and (2) fulfil the queen’s prevision of his success. With the king, the queen,—Ālavandār with her—entered the inner apartments, her joy knowing no bounds.

The monarch, true to his promise, invested Ālavandār with half his kingdom. In royal bliss thus did Ālavandār and his holy wife, who by this time joined him, remain



## CHAPTER IV.

## ÂLAVANDÂR'S SPIRITUALIZATION.

Râma-Misra was watching silently the caupence which Âlavandâr had reached so rapidly, and when he heard of Âkki's ignominious defeat, and Âlavandâr becoming a king, his joy knew no bounds and he danced with flags in hand. He now thought of carrying into effect the commission he had received, of making Âlavandâr the future Apostle of the Faith. So, he went to the palace, but the guards obstructed his entrance. He found his way however into the kitchen where contracting friendship with the cooks,<sup>1</sup> he ascertained from them the potherbs that pleased Âlavandâr most. Tûdurâlas, *ଶଡ଼ି* or *ଶମି*—he daily took to the kitchen for a period of six months, and yet no notice was taken of it. Wearied, he stopped away for a few days. Âlavandâr finding his favourite dish missing from his dinner so suddenly, enquired of the cooks the reason. They informed him of an old Brâhmana having, for six months uninterruptedly, brought the green herb and having stopped the supply for a few days. "If he should return again," commanded the king, after chiding them, "inform me at once." Râma-misra thought he would try again, and so put in his appearance with the favorite vegetable, after some interval. The king was immediately informed, and he ordered the venerable man being conducted into his presence. When he duly arrived, the king rose, and making obeisance, seated him with every mark of respect; and asked how he may reward him for his services,—by money or by lands. Misra said—"Good king, these riches I do not need from thee; for I have precious riches, amassed by your ancestors, to give thee, and I shall show thee where they lie treasured up. Till I put thee in possession of these, let me be admitted to thy presence without hindrance by the guards at thy gates." Âlavandâr was taken out of himself by

<sup>1</sup> In Hindu households in India, *sastis*, and they must be holy people, the cooks must be of the same caste, holier than the rest of the household as the employer, or above their hold.

<sup>2</sup> A thorny shrub bearing edible fruit.

this unexpected revelation, and placed his men under instructions to admit the worthy visitant freely without caring for ceremony.

Mîtra now began to teach Âlavandâr the Bhagavadgîtâ,—the essence of all the Upanishads. As Âlavandâr listened attentively through the eighteen books of this Sublime Poem, his spiritual sense was awakened, and a craving ceased in his heart to realise God, as is spoken therein. "How shall I realise Him?" asked he of his Âchârya. "That is taught in the Great Chârana Sûkta", promptly responded the teacher and taught its significant mysteries. The more Âlavandâr meditated on these, the more they entered deep into his heart. The saving Grace taught therein made him more and more inclined to surrender himself to God, and more and more cultivate the sense of resignation to His will. His soul bent more and more to Him with the nourishment the teachings gave, just as the ripening grain-stalks bend as they receive more milk. As days passed, his love for the Merciful grew warmer and warmer, and as this love increased, his attachment to other things became weaker and weaker. The Teacher watched the spiritual progress of his disciple, and thought the time was ripe for leading him to where his promised patrimonial wealth lay hidden. He led him therefore to the Holy Shrine of Srîrangam, where, pointing to God reposing therein in the serene glory of His presence, to all worshippers accessible, he said:—"दत्तत्रयसङ्गोऽथ नमस्कृत्य नमोऽर्चयन् सर्वदेवतासु तत्रैव नमस्कृत्य नमोऽर्चयन् सर्वदेवतासु तत्रैव नमस्कृत्य नमोऽर्चयन्" i.e., "Who will not worship Rangan, the most Holy,—if he be wise ! for doth not wisdom blossom here and keep Yama (death) out of sight !" This is your love, your heritage, and my trust, which I here discharge on this auspicious day."

Âlavandâr, with the spiritual vision with which he was by God's Grace endowed, saw in the Holy Image of Ranga

<sup>1</sup> The 60th verse Br. XVIII, Br. Gl. Fide p. xxi, Introd. Lives of Jâhnavi.

<sup>2</sup> Srîrangam-Mâhâtmya, I, 20.

the Treasure of the Universe enshrined, and exclaimed, with (a) feelings of remorse in his heart for past days, which had been spent without this Blessed Vision, and (b) feelings of bliss overflowing in streams of loving tears, at the fascinating sight he enjoyed - "O Blissful God" exclaimed he, "many days have I lost in the vain pursuits of the world. I mourn for this. Now I have seen Thee reclining on Thy Sēsha." I serve Thee for evermore. I find myself reclaimed from the death of worldly enjoyments, and initiated into the life of Thy service.

"चेवाविपिवावि वनप्रनिदाय पुत्रावदराः पशुबोधसखि ।

तत्यादयश्चभवात्तत्पुनो भवन्ति सर्वेवन्ति कृतकणाः ॥"

*'Lord! lands and friends and riches,  
Sons and wives, cattle and houses,—  
To him who has thy service tasted,  
Hateful objects become they.'*

After this, a determination came to him to renounce the world, and don the robes of the Sanyāsin, inasmuch as the love of the world and of God were incompatible with each other. Thenceforward he devoted himself to divine contemplation and service.

Ālavandār's spiritual fame attracted to him many disciples, of whom the following were notable — Periya-Nambi, Tiruk-kōttiyūr-Nambi, Periya-tirumalai Nambi, Māraṇāri-Nambi, Tiruk-kacchi-Nambi, Ālavandār Āzhvār, Tirumalai-y-āṇḍān, Vāṇamāmalai-y-āṇḍān, Taiva-vāri-y-āṇḍān, Iṣan-āṇḍān, Jiyar-āṇḍān, Tiruk-kurugūr-Appan, Tirumōhūr-Appan, Tirumōhūr-maṣrān, Taiva-p-perumāl, Vakul-ābbarāṇa-Somayājīyār, Tiruk karugūr-dāsar, Tirumāl-irunjola-dāsar, Vaḍa-maḍurai-piran-dār, Ālkondi-ammani, twenty in all. They were all learned and became evangelists as well of the Faith.

<sup>1</sup> For a lucid description of the symbolism conveyed by this name and representation of the Godhead, the readers are referred to p. 21 ff. Esoteric Hindooism, Part I. Wilson says in his *Viṣṇu purāṇa* — "We

have in the text a representation of one mode of *dhyaṇa* or contemplation, in which the thoughts are more readily concentrated by being addressed to a sensible emblem, instead of an abstract truth."

<sup>2</sup> *Brahma Purāṇa*, 2, 32.

Manakkāi-Nambi (Rāma-misra), who had five disciples, viz., Ālavandār himself, Taivattuk-k-arasu-Nambi, Gomāthattut-tiruvinnagar-appan, Sirup-pullār-udaiya-Pillai, and Vāṅgi-paratt ācāri, was now to deliver his last message to Ālavandār. "To Kurugai-k-kāval-appan has been entrusted another Mystery, viz., the Yoga (i.e., the process by which to know God, not merely to conjecture or believe by deep introspective meditation), which thou shalt learn from him," said he to Ālavandār, and explained, when the latter asked why he could not himself impart the Mystery — "My Guru Uyyakkondār to whom your grand sire Nāthamuni(gal) wished to impart this science, expressed himself as unworthy to receive the same in the words — "When the corpse lieth, where is wedlock" <sup>1</sup> I did not therefore receive the science. Nāthamuni entrusted it to his other intimate disciple K. Appan. Learn it from him. And I am now going to depart, to my disciples, give all learning and instruction, and make Srirangam your capital, and pass on to posterity the Faith bequeathed to us by Nāthamuni, your spiritual as well as bodily grand sire." So delivering himself, he passed away, with his heart fixed upon the holy feet of his Guru. His memorial verse runs thus :—

त्वयाऽप्यवकाशवद्मे देवसि त्वेति यत्किञ्चिदुच्यते :

"नयन्तो कथुनं नात्यरास्यसर्कपञ्चार्थवर्तिपद्वेष्ट ।

सः क्षीयत्यस्मिन्नसौम्यैव तस्यैव नमसि तं ताम् देवेकत्वम् ॥"

Time passed with Ālavandār happily in the work of propagating the faith and writing works, of which those that are extant are the *Sūtra-ratna*, *Siddhi-traya* and *Āgama-pramāṇya*, — the bulwarks of the Viśvākhādvaita-Vedānta. At this stage he bethought of visiting Kurugai-k-kāval-appan. Accompanied by his disciples, he proceeded thither and finding Appan was absorbed in Yoga, approached the sanctuary with the utmost caution and reverence, and planted himself by the wall on the other side of which Appan was seated. Withal, Appan exclaimed : — "Is there one of the Sottas-race (i.e., descendant of Nāthamuni) standing there ?" Surprised and with fear,

<sup>1</sup> Corpse means body, Wedlock means the union of soul with God or Yoga.

Ālavandār ventured to speak thus. "Holy Sars, yea, I am a most humble scion of that race, my name is Yamunai t-curaivar (Yāmunāchārya). I am come here to do thee obeisance." So saying, he went forward and fell at Appan's holy feet. Rising, after being blessed, he asked of Appan, how despite caution on his part, he had been discovered by him. To which, Appan said—"Son, when God is with me, He so loves me as to be lustless to all else, even Sri, His Spouse, is unable to withdraw His attention while He is so engaged, but now He looked away from me three or four times. I concluded thence that none other than a child of Sottai race was close by." At which account, Ālavandār was delighted, and entreated Appan that the Yoga-Mystery might be revealed to him, as directed by his Guru Mapakkal Nambū, for he had come in quest of it. "Certainly it is intended for thee, son," said Appan, "But I can only impart it at the moment of my death. That moment comes the next Pūshya-month, Guru-pūshya-yoga, Abhijit-muhūrta. Take this scrap on which the time is noted so as to put thee in mind of it. Come precisely at that moment." Prostrating to Appan, Yāmunāchārya returned to Śrīraṅgam.

*Adhayan-ōḍava*, or one of the great annual festival celebrations, in connection with the Holy Temple here, came round. It is the festival when all the 4000 Prahandhas of the Āshvāra are sung antiphonally. In the course of this recital, the Arāyār, <sup>1</sup> or the chief chorister of the Temple sang the verse of Tiruvāy-mōchi<sup>2</sup>, viz. *Kaḍuciam* (X 3. 8), in which occurs the passage—*Nadamine namarga' ullir etc.*, meaning

*'Speed, good souls, to Ananta-Sayana,'  
Remind We this—speed, oh speed.'*

<sup>1</sup> Tira-v-aṇṇa-p-porūmi Arāyār, son of Yāmunā. It may be noted here that while Yāmunā was a *Grihī*, he had four sons: Teyvattak-k-āraṇa-Nambū, Pillai-arana-Nambū, Sottai-Nambū and Tiruv-aṇṇa-p-porūmi. The son of the first of these sons is Sri-saṭa-

pāra or Periya-Uṇṇama Nambū, the maternal uncle of Rāmānjan (vide Rāmānjan's life).

<sup>2</sup> See our *Ashvār's Lives*, pp. xxi, 205 and 221, and our *Divine Wisdom of Uṇṇada Saints*.

<sup>3</sup> The Holy Shrine of Ananta-godra Nāḥa (Trevandrum, Travancore.)

This passage reiterated by Aṭaiyar was taken by Yāmunāchārya as a sign that a shrine so dear to Saint Nammāshvār<sup>1</sup> viz., Anantaśayana, was one, which to visit became imperative on him. He immediately rose and, placing his disciple Teyvavāri-y-Andān in charge of his *maṭham* (monastery), went on a pilgrimage to Anantaśayana, where he visited the Lord Seshuśayana by way of the three-doored sanctum. Some time passed thus. He suddenly remembered the scrap given him by Appan, and calling for it found to his surprise that it was the very moment he ought to have been with Appan for receiving the Yoga-Mysteries. With sorrow indescribable, he chid himself for his forgetfulness and wished, in his agony, for a *Puṣpakā-mandana*<sup>2</sup> to waft him instantly to Appan! Helpless and in sheer anguish he left Anantaśayana and started back for Srirangam.

In Srirangam, meanwhile, Teyva-vāri-y-Andān was unable to bear the separation of his Guru, Yāmunāchārya, and consequently became ill and wore away daily. Physicians were brought by his friends to examine the patient. They all declared that some deep mental affliction was at the root of his illness. But asked the friends "Is it worldly affliction of any kind, may be woman—gnawing at your heart?" "No affliction," said he, "troubles me, but affection which I have for my Guru, hence, if I am conducted to him promptly, I may hope to live." Despairing of his life, the friends laid him on a stretcher and carried him towards Anantaśayana. As they proceeded on their journey, Andān daily picked up strength and revived sufficiently to be able to go on foot. At Karaikamanai river-side, the Guru and the disciple met. The latter fell flat on sighting his Guru,—overcome by joy. The Guru, finding him thus lying motionless, addressed him thus. "Sri Rāma was a Master, hence He had the power to make his brother Bharata carry out his behest, (viz., to stay at Ayodhya till he returned from his exile in the forest), but I

<sup>1</sup> See his life in *Lines of Akshara*.

<sup>2</sup> A aerial vehicle such as that sent from Lanka to Ayodhya used by Rāmachandra for his journey. [Rāmadhyaya.]

seem no such master to thee, as I am powerless like Rāma to exact obedience from thee." This sarcastic remark penetrated deep into the heart of Āndān, and he felt that by transgressing the commands of his Guru to remain in Srīrangam, he had disobeyed him. Speechless therefore he lay.

The Guru taking compassion—his anger at the disobedience of Āndān abating by this time—said—"I believe, son, thou desirest to re-establish with me the relationship of master and disciple. If so I bid thee rise." On hearing this, Āndān rose, trembling with fear and stood dumb. The good men standing near remarked that Āndān's temperament was like that of Lakshmana, who said that his separation from Rāma would be like taking the fish out of the water [Rāmāyaṇa II 53. 31] Yāmunāchārya hearing this said—"Āndān! disciples constituted like thee are rare. I am proud of thee. But oh, much distress I find in thee. Take courage." So saying, he softly stroked him and bid him go and visit Anantaśayana. "Thou art my Anantaśayana. I know no other", burst out Āndān, opening his mouth for the first time. Yāmunāchārya was struck with the extraordinary character of his disciple and taking him to be for one who answers the description—

"देवेन गुरुणा कस्य न्यासविधिं प्रदीकते । तस्य वैकुण्ठदुग्धमभिधायका स्तर्षे पयसः ॥"

*"That Teacher is all who Faith bestows on his disciple*

*He is Vaikuntha itself, the Milk-sea and the Dadraka ",*

led him back to Srīrangam, which they all reached in due course.

In the company of his faithful followers, Yāmunāchārya was here engaged in the prosecution of his spiritual mission, but a thought now began to harass him that to carry on the good work he had begun, no competent soul was yet found among his disciples.

<sup>1</sup> Vaikuntha is Parama-pada or the Spiritual Universe, Milk-sea is the centre which in the Material Universe, God has made for Himself, and which is the source of all Incarnations (like the Milky Way or

the Nebula, said to be the source of all Systems) Dadraka is the place where Krishna, one of the Incarnations, established Himself on earth and in India.

## CHAPTER V.

## RÂMÂNUJA.

*His birth and studies.*

Yâmunâchârya was thus troubled in his mind as to a competent successor to whom to hand on the Torch of Faith for posterity. His disciple Nambî or *Nâbhâpârna*<sup>1</sup> had proceeded to The Holy Mount of Tirupati to live there for a time in the service of the Lord seated therein (Venkatâchala-pati). He had two sisters, Bhûmîp-parâtî and Periya-parâtî, or Bhû-dêvi and Sri-dêvi. The elder Bhû-dêvi was married to Âsûri Keçavaperumâl, the performer of many Yâgas,—residing at Sri perumbûdûr<sup>2</sup>. Sri-dêvi<sup>3</sup> was married to Kamalanayana-bhatta of the Vattâ-maṇi clan, residing at Nâthalai-mangalam.

Of Bhû-dêvi<sup>4</sup> was born Râmanuja, the Great Reformer and Religionist of the 12th century,<sup>5</sup> just as Râma was born of Kausalya and Kṛṣṇa of Devaki. Of him it is written :

अनन्तः प्रथमं रूपं लक्ष्मणश्च ततः परम् । नक्षत्रं स्त्रीयं स्तु कसौ कश्चिद्भविष्यति॥<sup>6</sup>

*"It is the First Ananta that became Lakshmana next,  
and Balabhadra next, again the One next in Kai."*

And this One was the Great Râmanuja born in the Kali Age, as the Spiritual Sun to dispel the darkness of sin and ignorance, reigning rampant as said in the verse —

इति नृशं स्मृतिं सुतां पापेषु पलिता दिवा ।

चक्रानि च विहीनानि सः सुन्दो वनेति कलिः॥<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See No. 23, Hierarchic Table, *Lives of Âchâra*.

<sup>2</sup> Near Madras.

<sup>3</sup> Also called Dymtimati.

<sup>4</sup> Also called Kântimati.

<sup>5</sup> See No. 27, Hierarchic Table to our *Lives of Âchâra*, (A. C. 1017).

<sup>6</sup> *Tâdaragiri-mâhâtmya*, I, 22.

<sup>7</sup> *Bhâratkṛt-parvata*.



*"The Scriptures are lost, and so the Traditional Laws,  
The twice-born have become degenerate,  
The allied sciences as well are wrecked,  
Oh, how Kali (Iron age) grows in power ! "*

To Harita Rishi was also, by God, foretold the coming of the Great Luminary, Rāmānuja, as follows

मदंशं यो महावीर्यं श्लेषास्त्रे धरवीधर । जगता मुपकाराय तत्र वंद्ये भविष्यति ॥<sup>1</sup>

*In thy line, Harita ! will be born Śaṣha himself—  
My Own—for worlds' Salvation.*

Thus then was ushered into the world a Great Saviour, in the fulness of his own age.

Tirumalai-Nambi<sup>2</sup> (the disciple of Yāmunāchārya) got tidings of this birth, and forthwith proceeded to Śrī-perumbūdūr (10 miles from the station of Tiruvallūr, Madras Railway), to visit the child. Seeing his friend Āsūrī Kṣava, he congratulated him on the auspicious event and said - "Friend, I see the blessed child. He is above his kind. The light in his face indicates this. He possesses, in embryo, all the qualities which shall make him a sage, learned and wise. Name him therefore Lakshmana as he will be to God as Lakshmana was to Rāma. Lakshmana (Haya-perumāḷ) is incarnated as Rāmānuja, (Iḷai-Āzhvār) As the illustrious child grew, the several sacraments binding on the Brāhmaṇas were duly administered till he came to be full sixteen years of age, and by that time, he had passed through the student's course, viz. the learning of the Vedas and all that appertains to that study. He was now married, or as the Vaidikas say, he duly entered into the Order of the Householder after Brahmacharya. He left his home in search of a competent teacher who would teach him the Vedānta and found one in Yādava-prakāṣa, living at Turu-p-puṭkushī in the neighbourhood of Perumāḷ-kōil, or Kāñchipuram (Conjivaram) ; and here he joined other students learning under that teacher.

<sup>1</sup> *Bhāṣya-pari-māhātmya*, III, (104-5).

<sup>2</sup> Called Śrī-miṇa-pūruṇ, the maternal uncle of Rāmānuja.

Meanwhile, Kumala-nayana-bhatta at Mashalai mangalam,<sup>1</sup> became the father of a boy, the mother being his wife Sri-devi; as noted. Tiramalai Nambi receiving the news, hastened to the place and congratulating Bhatta on the happy event, foretold that the child was one of great promise; he would grow to be very wise and good and unworldly, and an ardent Champion of Religion. He was to be named Góvinda.<sup>2</sup> All the Samskâras (sacraments) were regularly administered in his case. He came of age and also entered the order of the householder. Hearing of his cousin-leather studying under Yádava-prakâsa, he gladly joined him to prosecute studies in his good company.

In the course of their readings, Yádava came across the passage. सत्यं ज्ञानं परमं ब्रह्म [Truth Up II, 1 I] and he explained it in a way most repugnant to the spirit of the passage itself. For the passage means.—

“Brahman (God) is Truth (*satyam*), Knowledge (*gnânam*), and Infinity (*anantam*).”

But Yádava said that the attributes of Truth, Knowledge and Infinity could not co-exist in Brahman, inasmuch as broken-horn-ness, horn-lessness, and full-horn-ness, could not co-exist in a cow, for example; i. e. a cow cannot have broken horns, no horns and be fully horned at one and the same time, and therefore Brahman cannot simultaneously possess various attributes. Brahman with attributes was therefore a logical impossibility. Râmânuya protested with his teacher that this Upanishad passage could not be thus misinterpreted and so tortured as to suit his own imaginary Brahman. Challenged by the teacher to furnish his own explanation, Râmânuya argued thus:—“To begin with, a sentence cannot mean otherwise than what it is intended to mean. “That Brahman is Truth etc.” is what is evident in this passage. It does not run thus —“Brahman is not Truth,” so as to make Brahman

<sup>1</sup> Now known as Madhura-mangalam (near Coovimam.)

<sup>2</sup> Or Embâr, No. 31 of Hierarchic Table in our *Life of Ashvira*.

devoid of any attribute, thus reducing It to a non-entity. And then, if there is Brahman, It must have attributes, for an attributeless Brahman can have no existence (*truth*). A thing must be *some-thing*, not *no-thing*. And thirdly the attributes *Truth* &c. are not inconsistent with each other so as to preclude their co-existence in Brahman, such as the inconsistency of light and darkness co-existing in space for example. The attribute *Truth* is meant to show that Brahman exists not at one moment merely, and ceasing to exist beyond that moment. *Brahman is Truth* is therefore intended to establish Brahman's *existence in eternity*, or Its *eternality in time*. *Brahman is Knowledge* is next intended to establish that Brahman is *Spirit*, for *Knowledge means Thought*. *Thought means Intelligence, Sentience* and so on. And thus *Knowledge* is an inseparable adjunct of Brahman, for otherwise Brahman would be no *Spirit*, but simple non-intelligent or non-sentient or non-thinking stuff like lifeless matter. *Brahman is Knowledge* therefore establishes that Brahman is *Spirit* or *Life*. *Brahman is Infinity* is next intended to establish that Brahman is without limits or conditions, or Its *infinity in space and mode*. *Truth* therefore is the term which characterizes Brahman as *Eternal*, distinguishing It from what is *non-eternal*, *Knowledge* is the term which characterizes Brahman as *Spirit* or *Life*, distinguishing It from what is *non-spirit* or *non-life*, and *Infinity* is the term which characterizes Brahman as *Infinite*, distinguishing It from what is *non-infinite* (or conditioned by space-limits or mode-limits). And these attributes and infinite others can co-exist in Brahman without mutual contradiction, as redness, softness, perfume &c., can harmoniously co-exist in the flower. The analogy of the cow is not appropriate in this case, the analogy of the flower as quoted, or the sun having light and heat co-existing, are appropriate. And therefore to try to postulate an attributeless Brahman, or a Brahman in whom different attributes cannot co-exist, is neither logical nor consistent with the affirmative character of the Vedic passage in question." Yādava after hearing this, simply said in disdain: "Then, to argue with me?" and kept silent.

On another day, Rāmānuja,—disciple as he was—was anointing his Guru Yādava with oil, when Yādava took into his head to decant on the Vedic verses —

नमः स्या तच्छब्दं पुरस्कृतं येन यद्विषां [Chhând, Up. I, 6, 7]

'Brahmaa,' he said, '(or He who is the Golden-hued in the Sun), has his eyes red like the posteriors of the monkey.' When Rāmānuja heard this, he felt a pang shooting across his heart to find that he should hear noble Vedic passages thus abused and ill-treated by Yādava. His grief was so keen that a hot tear stole in to his eye, and dropped on the lap of Yādava, as Rāmānuja was bending over him to rub his head with oil. The drop scorched Yādava. He started and looked up. Seeing Rāmānuja troubled, "What ails thee?" asked he. "I am grieved," he said, "that beautiful Vedic lines are so awkwardly construed." "What is thy interpretation, then?" angrily vociferated Yādava. "Sir," cried Rāmānuja, "can you not see that he means *water*, and *pibats* means to *drink*. Water-drinker is thus *kopa*, the *ens*, or the *lotus-stalk*. *Āsa* is to open (*vikaśaṃ*) or to rest (*uparacṣaṃ*). *Pandurita* is the *lotus*. And therefore God in the Sun is He whose eyes are like the *lotus* which blooms under the balmy beams of the sun, or *lotus* which rests on its stalk below? It is to repudiate God to deny Him Person, and when Vedas postulate such a Personality, it is doubly to repudiate Him by reading blasphemous similes into the Vedas, where reverential gravity and grandeur are intended. Such constructions betoken nothing short of heresy." Yādava heard this irresistible oration of Rāmānuja, and flared up saying "Haughty youth! if thou canst not abide by my instruction, thou must leave me." Rāmānuja spoke not a syllable in reply, but took his departure.

The surprising intelligence of Rāmānuja, his original ways, and divinely disposed heart, all combined to set Yādava

<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, even Bāṅkura, who preceded Yādava, permits in this offensive interpretation though as a Vedic scholar he could, if he

had liked, seen through the blunder. He however adds a clause in his commentary that this illustration is not meant in derision.

thinking; and his cogitations landed him in vice inasmuch as he believed that Rāmānuja was a rival, who would any day be his superior in learning, subversive of his philosophy of *advaita* (monism), in short an oddity who may injure his reputation as the teacher in the land, and a possible revolutionist whom it was expedient to put an end to.

Thus thinking, he called together those disciples who were left after his ways and said "Look, all of you do quietly subscribe to my views, but this Rāmānuja alone is adverse and perverse, and entertains opinions opposed to mine. He is likely to become our declared enemy. Can you devise some means by which to do away with him?" They suggested many ways of disposal, but none of them recommended itself to Yādava, as it meant sinning, for which Śāstras declared that one must expiate and suffer, and secondly in whatever way Rāmānuja was to be done away with, that must be above suspicion. After much consultation and deliberation they pitched upon a plot, viz., to invite Rāmānuja back into their fold, treat him as their best friend—as one without whom they could not live—and then they would start on a holy pilgrimage to Vārāṇasī (Benares) and there drown Rāmānuja in the Ganga (Ganges) river, near Maṇikarpikā-gbāt—the ostensible object being pilgrimage, the real one being Rāmānuja's death—death which, taking place in the Holy Ganga, would be counted as an affair of merit, which they thought would not involve the actors in sin! What travesty of spiritual ethics, by Yādava!! A veritable whitened sepulchre he must have been.<sup>1</sup>

Into a hellish conspiracy such as this then, Yādava and his accomplices entered, even as Duryodhana did as regards Dharmaputra and his brothers, whom he had contrived to kill in a wax-house. They therefore invited Rāmānuja to join them as without him they said they felt uncongenial, and begged of him to prosecute his studies as he willed, undisturbed. Some time passed thus.

<sup>1</sup> Probably Yādava's moral (immoral) sense took refuge in his pantheistic theory of *Māya*, or illusion

of the world, which then seems to provide no strong motive for strenuous effort after holiness.

Yādava now announced his intention of going on a pilgrimage to Kāśī (Benares), and making due preparations, started on the journey with Rāmānuja of course, Govinda-bhatta, Rāmānuja's maternal cousin following. Govinda somehow got scent of the evil designs of Yādava on Rāmānuja. The other disciples too had their suspicion that Govinda might divulge and defeat their machinations. They took care therefore to keep him and Rāmānuja apart as far as possible. They had now arrived at the Vindhya-range of hills, and while crossing a valley, Rāmānuja stopped a little behind for purposes of nature. And Govinda contrived to tarry with him. The others were a little in advance. Govinda took advantage of this seclusion to disclose to Rāmānuja the designs of Yādava in as few words as possible and advised him to escape. So saying he left Rāmānuja.

Rāmānuja taking the hint, left the main path and turned aside, soon hiding himself in the wilderness of the Vindhya. He roamed about in the jungle aimlessly, the fierce sun beating upon his head, and stones and thorns hurting his feet, drawing forth blood. Wandering away thus into unknown regions for some time, he was fagged out; and hungry, thirsty and footsore, was unable to advance further. "Only greatest sinners," he cried, "deserve this fate. Hence it is written—*विष्णुर्दृष्टते यान्मुष्ककोटरासिम् । इष्यसर्पिर्हि जगते देहसि यमुन्मथम्*" e. g. "Those who steal others' land are born in the waterless wilds of the Vindhya, as dark snakes lodging in dry anthills." He was bewildered, not knowing where to go and what to do. He looked round for help, mind-troubled and heart-sick. While he was in this state, all on a sudden burst upon his sight a Fowler and His Wife.

God has defined himself as *One who can have no joy without His faithful ones* (साहचर्यवान् मातसे यद्वै स्वधुषिर्विदः), and *One who succumates with bow, arrow, sword and even a wife, to befriend His faithful in times of peril* (सदृश स्वर्धुषः सद्रव्यमातसेषुभूत् । यत्पत्न्यायवृजार्थं यथिपतः जगत्तनः<sup>1</sup>). Seeing them, Rāmānuja heaved a sigh and was

<sup>1</sup> *Tishoo-Dharmas*, Ch. 31<sup>2</sup> *Brhadanda-Purāna*.

comforted at the thought that some one had come or been deputed by God to succour him in his distress. Rāmānuja accompanying them asked who they were and whither they were going. "We are Fowler's coming from Siddhāsrāma in the North and are wending our way to Satyavrata-kanētra<sup>1</sup> in the South," said they. "May I accompany you to that Holy shrine?" asked Rāmānuja. "Most willingly," said they, "follow us." They loading, Rāmānuja trudged on, till Vindhya was now out of sight, and the sun was setting. Rāmānuja performed his evening prayers. And as it was getting dark, all the three sat down under the shelter of a big tree, and were sinking into the soft embraces of sleep. The Fowler's wife addressing her husband said,—"Dear, can you get me a drink of water to allay my thirst?" "Wait a little," answered the husband, "directly it dawns, I promise to find you close by a beautiful pond, full of cool and fragrant water." Rāmānuja overheard this conversation and thought, "Oh, if only it were in my power to do this kind Pair a service now, at least as a requital for their kindness to me! But I am in unknown regions." And he dozed away in such reflections.

The night had now nearly worn away, a flush suffused the East, and a morning breeze gently began to blow. Rāmānuja rose with thoughts of God in his breast, and offered up his morning prayers. After this he looked round for his Guides, in order to pursue the journey, but to his amazement he did not find them. He called for them aloud and searched in every direction, but all to no purpose. He proceeded a few steps in alarm, not knowing whither he was going. But by this time the sun had appeared above the Eastern horizon. Rāmānuja could see his surroundings better, and he heard peoples' voices. He took heart and, a few steps more, discovered a pleasant garden, a pond<sup>2</sup> and a few men standing by. "What a contrast this day is with yesterday," gladly

<sup>1</sup> The sacred or legendary name of Conjevaram.

<sup>2</sup> This is called *Sāras-k-Kaver*, still existing and from which water is daily brought to Lord Varadāśjavāmi for ablation.

cried he, astonished. "What country could this be? Is there any town close by?" he asked himself.

The people gazed at him wonderingly, saying "Art thou mad, Brāhmaṇa? Dost thou not see before thee the bright Pūṇyākōṭi-rūpām?" At this Rāmānuja looked up and saw the high Gopuram (or cupola) of the Temple of Lord Varadarāja, the worshipful Deity of Kāñchīpuram. He was struck dumb with delight and astonishment. It now dawned upon him that He who had directed his steps in the Vindhyan wilds was no other than God himself, who not only guided him but miraculously transported him over a distance of nearly 1,000 miles in a night! Like the joy that thrilled Sitā when she heard of Rāvana's fall, like the joy that ravished Rāma when he heard Hanumān say "I have found Sitā", like the joy of Hanumān when he entered the Mādhubana on his return from Lanka, was Rāmānuja's joy after the wonderful adventures he had recently passed through. He simply fainted away with delight, especially when he reflected how God descends to the weak and helpless, even as Saint Parāśkṛmā fainted when he reflected how Krishna, though God, submitted to be bound by a rope by Yajoda! Charmed into ecstacy, he cried—"To Arjuna, O God! Thou revealedst Thy Beautiful Form, but to me Thou hidst Thyself under the guise of a Fowler. I took Thee for a mere Fowler and I beseech Thy pardon for taking Thee for an ordinary creature. Even as Arjuna besought Thee, so do I—" "Krishna! Yādava! Achyuta! Overlook it, if taking Thee for friend, I called Thee by names such as these, unmindful of Thy Greatness as God, remit, O God! any slight I may have, unwarily shown Thee, while we moved together, sat together and ate together and joked together, as equals!" Rāmānuja was then drowned in rapturous delight after the wonderful experiences he had. Out of sheer joy he fell prostrate, rose, fell again, shed tears of joy, was bathed in perspiration in short, felt his whole being divinely transported beyond himself. From that day on, he carried water daily from the holy well (*śilāḥ k-kāṇṇ*) to the Lord Varadarāja.

<sup>1</sup> Bhagavadgītā, Xith Book.

<sup>2</sup> Bhagavadgītā, XI. 41, 42.



## CHAPTER VI.

## YĀDAVA, GOVINDA AND RĀMĀNUJA.

Yādava-prakāśa and his disciples, finding that Rāmānuja did not follow, stopped and waited for him for some time. Govinda came up however and joined them. "You have come, but where is Rāmānuja?" asked Yādava. "I never stopped with him," said Govinda in reply, "I walked my own way, and so I am not aware of what has become of him. Yādava sent his disciples in search, but they returned unsuccessful. "What could have happened to the poor youth, Oh!" thus did they all feign grief. Baulked thus in their intentions, they continued their journey sullenly to on Kāśi.

They duly arrived there. It was the month Māgha, and they went to bathe in the Holy Ganga. While bathing, Govinda found a *Sivaliṅgam* (phallus-stone) floating up into his hand. He showed this to Yādava, who said "You are a most fortunate man. Gangādhara (Śiva) himself has appeared to you. From this day you are most dear and venerable to us. Your name from this day shall be —" Ullangai-kōṇṇṇḍa-Nāyanār (he who brought in his palm)." They all now started homeward for Kānchipuram, resting on their way Jagannātha, Ahobila and other shrines. Before reaching Kānchi,

- 1 U Nāyanār took leave of Yādava, saying he would instal the *Sivaliṅgam* in a suitable place and then join them. Yādava permitting, Nāyanār went to his birth-place Maṣṭhalai-Mangalam, and there with the help of the learned men of the place installed the *Sivaliṅgam*, and remained in its staunch service. Kālahasti is a place sacred to Śiva. It is written that this Śiva appeared to Nāyanār in his dream commanding him to join his Temple-service at Kālahasti. A dream was dreamt by the Temple-authorities of the place also, commanding them to proceed and bring Nāyanār with honors. They did so, and bringing Nāyanār in festive fashion, made him the dignitary of their temple, investing him with the signet-ring and other insignia of that office.

Yādava-prakāṣa, as already said, had arrived at Kāñchi. Here to his astonishment he found Rāmānuja, who he had believed had been lost in the jungles. He feigned joy however at seeing him and said "Our grief at your loss in the Viṇḍhyān wilds, was very great, at seeing you now, it has given place to boundless joy." Rāmānuja narrated to him how he lost sight of them as they were much in advance, how he lost his way, and how while wandering sick and sore in the mazes of the forest, a Fowler broke upon his sight suddenly; and how He guided his steps so that to his wonderment, he found he had traversed a great distance while he thought he slept under a tree, but waking up to find he had been brought to Kāñchi. This account made Yādava to stare at Rāmānuja in combined fear and wonder; whom he now looked upon as a being not of the ordinary run of mankind, not to be despised but looked upon as one deserving reverential regards, and feeling remorse in his heart for his evil intents towards him. He could not therefore but turn his hate into love for him, and therefore invited Rāmānuja to grace his school with his presence and to complete his studies if he so willed.

While these events were passing at Kāñchi, two Sri Vaiṣṇavas<sup>1</sup> of Kāñchi travelled to Srirangam, to pay their devotions to Rāṅganātha, which they did and then went to Ālavandār (Yāmunāchārya), the great apostle of the Faith who was there teaching at the time<sup>2</sup>. After due exchange of courtesies, Yāmunāchārya asked them for any news of an interesting nature at Kāñchi. They related to him how a youth Rāmānuja by name, born at Bhātapurī (Sri Perumbūdūr) came to Kāñchi to read Vedānta under a uni-staffed<sup>3</sup> Sanyāsi, Yādava-prakāṣa; how in the course of their readings, differences rose between them as regards interpretations of Veda-texts, —Yādava contending for a quality-less God, and Rāmānuja for a quality-full One, and so on—, and how, on a certain

<sup>1</sup> Devout followers of Viṣṇu.

<sup>2</sup> *Vide* his life.

<sup>3</sup> Uni-staffed Sanyāsins belong to

the Advaita School, and the Tri-staffed to the Viśiṣṭādvaita school.

The staff is made of bamboo sticks.

day, a certain blasphemous exegetic by Yādava of a Veda-  
passage excited and pained Rāmānuja and drew forth burning  
tears from his eyes, which accidentally falling on Yādava's  
tough scorched him like fire, how on his challenging, Rāmānuja  
gave his beautiful interpretation that the passage meant that  
God's eyes resembled the lotus opening under the sun's rays,  
and how this and other disputations of the sort led to their  
separation, Yādava's plot on his life and the rest of events,  
adventurous and miraculous, which followed thereafter in  
succession.

Yāmanāchārya heard this account with rapt attention and  
exclaimed :—

अस्य एकद्वि सम्पन्ति इस्ति कायामिव इत्याह ।

अथैवसन्तो यदिहस्यवन्ति तत्रैवताम सरसीरसावाम्॥

"The bad are legion like fire-sparks in a furnace

But the good, if found in the fire, are like lotuses therein."

So saying he felt a great longing to immediately go and  
see Rāmānuja. He repaired to the Lord Ranganātha and taking  
leave of Him, left Srirangam with his followers. On his way,  
paying honors to God Nāyanār and the Three First Ābhvāra at  
Tirukkōlūr<sup>1</sup>, reached Kānchi in due time.

Tirukkacchi-nambī,<sup>2</sup> on hearing his Āchārya coming,  
gathered together the holy people of Kānchi, and with Śrī  
Sathagōpa, Tirtha and Prasāda of the Holy Temple of Varada-  
rāja, went forward to meet and welcome him. Yāmanāchārya  
received the Holy gifts of God, and seeing Tirukkacchi Nambī,  
his disciple, lying prostrate at his feet for joy and veneration  
for the Guru, lifted him up with affection and inquired —  
"Gajēndrādāsa "Art thou steady at thy faning services to  
Lord Varaha?" "By your grace, Sire, The Lord is accept-  
ing my humble services," said he. And then they proceeded

<sup>1</sup> See Lives of Ābhvāra.

<sup>2</sup> No. 36, Ibid, Hierarchy Table. Here read pp. 3499, Vol. VII,  
Bhagavadvishaya — Āmudāra.

<sup>3</sup> A Sanskrit name for Tirukkacchi-Nambī.

together to the Temple, where Yāmunāchārya paid due honors to the Lord Varada.

While he was thus employed, Yādava-prakāsa came on a visit to the temple, with his followers. Yāmunāchārya saw them, and asked who among his followers was Rāmānuja. They pointed him out "That bright and glorious central figure," said they, "possessing those fine shoulders, broad and long, like Rāma Himself,—that is Rāmānuja." Yāmunāchārya drank him in with his eyes, and sent his prayers after him, as the host was moving away.

Yāmunāchārya now mounted up to the Central Shrine of Lord Varada (called Hastagiri) and standing before the Deity sent up a prayer to Him thus —"O Great Lord! grant me a boon. Thou art *Vara-da* (Boon-Grantor), for यस्य प्रसादकृत्तया नमिदं स्मृयतेति पदुः पश्यामि अनेन च वक्ति युक्तः । अन्धः प्रपद्यति सुतं नमते च बन्धा तं देव मेव वरं हरत् नतोऽस्मि ॥ i.e. 'By thy favour, the deaf hears, the lame runs, the dumb speaks, the blind sees, and the barren bears, I have sought Thee.' Grant me then, that this Rāmānuja shall become the bearer of the Torch of our Faith." An urgent call from Srirangam now obliging Yāmunāchārya to return immediately, he found no leisure to do anything more, nor time even to say something to Tirukkacchi-Nambi, about his wishes and future plans. To Srirangam thus he returned.

## CHAPTER VII.

## RĀMĀNUJA—CONTROVERSIES AND MIRACLES.

Yādava prakāśa was conducting his Vedānta classes as usual. It so happened that the princess of the then Rājā<sup>1</sup> of the dominions, to which Fānci had then belonged, became obsessed with an evil spirit (*brahma rakṣas*). The Rājā was endeavouring to find an able exorcist of demons. He was told that Yādava was well versed in such lore. The Rājā sent men to invite him. They went and told him the state of affairs with the princess and that he was wanted. Yādava said to the men, "Go ye back and tell the spirit, "Yādava commandeth thee to leave the princess." They returned and delivered the message. "Yādava commandeth. Leave thou the princess," they demanded of the spirit. "Go back," bellowed the rakṣas, "and tell Yādava from me, to depart from this country." The Rājā's men ran to Yādava again and delivered this message from the rakṣas. Yādava now went himself with a troop of his disciples, and stationing himself before the obsessed princess, began to mutter potent magical incantations and showing his fist, bid the devil depart. But the devil (i.e., princess) stretched its legs and pointing them towards Yādava said, in sovereign contempt of him — "Thinkest thou Yādava that I do not know thy magic and magical formulae? Knowest thou not I am a *brahma-rakṣas*? Neither thy *mantra* nor thy person can be efficacious as against me. Thou hast no knowledge of me, nor hast knowledge of thyself. Get thee gone." "But," put in Yādava, "hast thou knowledge of me, and of thyself as thou boasteth?" "Learn then from me," retorted the rakṣas, "thou wert a gaunt in thy past birth, living in the holes of the bank of the Madhurāntaka tank. A batch of Śrī-Vaiṣṇavas were travelling to Tirumalai (Tirupati) on a holy pilgrimage. They stopped at the tank, cooked, ate and left the place. They had left the leavings of their food, and had spilt some water. Thou didst then scamper to the place and

<sup>1</sup> Virarājendra and his successor Parakeśari Varma, as also the Western Chalukyas were about this time in possession of Conjevaram [South Indian Inscriptions Vol. II. p. 117 ff.]

ate of that food and drank of that water. This fortuitous merit brought thee to this present *janma* (birth) of thine as a Brāhmana with learning. As for myself, I was a Brāhmana in my past birth. I began to perform a *Yāga* (a Brāhmanic sacred ritual) but there were omissions in the regular chanting of the mantras, and the acts connected therewith. And hence the *rikshara-janma* has devolved on me. Seest thou now I have knowledge, and thou hast not?" "Very good," said Yādava, "tell me then who will make thee dislodge from the princess?" "There," said the devil, pointing with its hands folded in fear and worship, "in thy ranks there is that angel from Heaven incarnate among men, whom thou hast the glory of counting as thy student, and whose name is Rāmānuja. At his bidding I must flee!" Yādava turned to Rāmānuja and begged of him to command the evil spirit to leave. Rāmānuja did so. "But I will not," it said, "unless, O Holy soul, thou place thy Holy Foot upon my head." Rāmānuja did so. "I now salute thee Holy Rāmānuja," said the spirit in a loud tone, "I am leaving the princess." "But stay," said Rāmānuja, "how shall we know that thou hast left?" By this sign" replied the spirit, "into that *asaṁbhā* tree yonder, I shall enter, the evidence thereof shall be the breaking of a branch." And so it happened. The Rāja was overjoyed, and loaded them with presents and honors. Yādava-prakāsa showered plaudits on Rāmānuja and glad at least that his prestige was somewhat saved by his noble disciple, returned to his retreat.

In Srirangam, Yāmunāchārya was in the meanwhile conducting his expositions of The Faith, of which the Four Thousand *Prabandhas*<sup>1</sup> constituted the chief documents. When he came across St. Nammāchvār's verse (*Tiru-mozaki IV 10. 5*) which proclaims that there is but One God, "On whom, all ye, O *Laingas*, *Samanas* and *Sākya*s<sup>2</sup>, shall believe", he felt

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Luke IV 33-35. And in the synagogues no vicious devil etc. Also Luke X. 35 ff.

<sup>2</sup> See our *Āchvār's Lives*.

<sup>3</sup> *Laingas*—Bairavs, *Samanas*—Jains, *Sākya*s—Buddhists.

more anxious than ever to find a capable successor, and still more fervently prayed to Lord Varadarāja to wean Rāmānuja from the heretical associations of Yādava, and appoint him for The Faith. In answer as it were to his ardent petition, a crisis was preparing.

For, Yādava was one day explaining the Vedānta-texts सर्वं कस्मिन् भवति,<sup>1</sup> and वेदो न नास्ति किञ्चन,<sup>2</sup> as if they meant that soul (man) and God were identical.\* The first passage means —*All this indeed is Brahman*, and the second means —*There is not the least diversity here*. According to Yādava, the first passage meant that *all this Cosmos is God*, the second passage meant that *all the diversities that are seen in the Cosmos are illusory*. Rāmānuja took objection to these interpretations and said that the cosmos can never be identical with Brahman (God) nor can it be proved unreal. For the first passage *all this indeed is Brahman* meant that the cosmos is permeated with His Spirit, i. e. full of God, in other words the cosmos has no existence independent of God, it exists by His will. He is its Creator, Preserver and Destroyer. He is its Ruler and rules by His immanence. And the second passage meant that the diversity is of the cosmos and real inasmuch as it is sustained by the Unity of God; that therefore whom sees the diverse cosmos as severed from God sees not right. There is but One God, neither two nor many. In Him is all. That is the meaning of the text. Cosmos is not denied inasmuch as its existence is eternal substantially, though it exteriorly undergoes adjectival change. It is an axiom that *nothing can come out of nothing* अथैव किञ्चित् कश्चित् सृजते. The cosmos is real. It is in God, who is thus one only, not many. This passage is thus an assertion, not a negation, of the cosmos.

<sup>1</sup> Chhāndogya Upaniṣad, III. 14-1.

<sup>2</sup> Bṛihadāraṇyaka, Up. VI. 4-19.

\* A Christian writer says "To say that man with all his passionate temper, his deceitful ways, his foul imaginations, his base uncharitable thoughts, is God, is the fatal and destructive error which for so many

centuries has been leading India ever further along the path of decadence" [Ezra, p. 146] of XXII, 1904.] We Viśiṣṭadvaitins say exactly the same thing, but which the Christian knows not yet

As obstinately as Yādava preached his pantheism, so obstinately did Rāmānuja rebut him. Yādava got enraged at last. "No more can you read with me, Sir" he cried, "you must henceforth find your own congenial teacher."

Rāmānuja was glad to leave this teacher of impossible and absurd philosophy. Straight home went he, and informed his mother Śrī-Dēvi of all that happened. "Enough of thy studies, son!" said she; there is Tirukkaccāi-Nambi who is in great favour with Lord Varada-Rāja. Seek his advice and service, and abide by his will. That will do thee all the good." Rāmānuja at once sought T. Nambi and besought him to employ him in divine services in the Temple, even as Lakshmaṇa besought of Rāma—

विद्यताभिलिखीव [Rāmānuja III 18. 7]

"Rāma" say 'do,' and I am thy servant."

S. Nambi said—"Lord Varadarāja much likes the water from the Śāla-well you were once bringing him. Fetch the same daily and serve Him." Thus therefore did Rāmānuja employ himself.



# CHAPTER VIII.

## ĀLAVANDĀR'S LAST DAYS AND LAST WORDS.

We shall for a moment turn to Srirangam. Yāmunā was aging now. He became ill. Tiruvarangapperumāḥ Araiyar<sup>1</sup> approached him, followed by Yāmunā's disciples Tirukkōṭṭiyur-Nambī<sup>2</sup> and Periya-Nambī<sup>3</sup>. The latter prayed to him to give them the best salutatory advice. Yāmunā spoke thus — "Good souls, look upon the shrine of Ranganātha as your very life, the Great God enthroned in that shrine as your Saviour, make Tiruppanābhār — the Panchama Saint<sup>4</sup> — who is the beloved of this Great God, your ideal for loving contemplation. This holy Saint is to God Ranga (of Srirangam) as Karumbarutia Nambī<sup>5</sup> the potter — is to God Venkātēśa (of the Tirupati Hill), as Tirukkaocchi-Nambī — the Vaisya<sup>6</sup> — is to God Varada-Rāja (of Kāncīpuram). This Saint, to you, sire," addressing Araiyar, "is your very soul." And continued — "What is dear to you, Holy Sire, is dear to me; the means of your salvation, are my means as well. Araiyar, prostrating to Yāmunā said, "Sire, you now seem to talk as if you are envisaging truths as exist in Nitya-vibhūti (= Eternal or Unvarying Cosmos = Heaven). It makes me almost envious to study you thus." "Sire", Yāmunā said, "how can you be envious of me, if I go to Nitya-vibhūti before you do? Can great and good men like you be envious of others' fortune? So, if I leave you all in advance, reconcile yourselves thus." Now to all his disciples, he administered general instructions thus — "Hear me, sons! A prepense is he who has absolutely resigned himself to God. If after professing so, he should still entertain doubts as to whether his soul went all in the safe

<sup>1</sup> Vide No. 23 Hierarchic Table, *Lives of Āchāryas*.

<sup>2</sup> Vide No. 24. *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Vide No. 25. *Ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> See his *Life* and foot note to page 137 *Ibid.*, and our recent *Lecture on the Panchamas*.

<sup>5</sup> See *Venkātāchala Māhātmya*. He is called *Uśama*, the potter.

<sup>6</sup> The third lower caste from the Brāhmins.

keeping of God, that very doubt is proof of his want of trust in God. A true believer is (and is only he who feels quite sure of his soul's safety in His arms, and that his body is a temporary form begot by Karma, ceasing when Karma ceases. A *prapanna* is then one who has intellectually divested himself thus of all concern, either as regards his soul or his body, both being in the keeping of two divergent determining agents. This resigned attitude of the mind constitutes the true *prapanna* (believer). Dwell on the name contained in the Holy Name *Nârâyana*, as it contains the sum of all divine wisdom. It is

'Karma means not. This is the inherent will in the soul. This will is subjective. This shapes out an objective, for which matter is associated with. Like God Soul is eternal like the eternality of God's attribute, because of God's eternality Karma or will which is innate in the soul, is eternal with it. A Christian might say that this dogma puts a limit to God's power, inasmuch as Karma or will is something which He did not make, and therefore circumscribing the sovereignty of God. Karma becomes therefore another "Unknown God" containing in itself potentiality for the soul's future and therefore the soul can strive for itself without or independent of God. To shut by the force of Karma, God is made dependent, if not altogether rendered nugatory. Karma therefore is incompatible with an independent sovereign God. To show we say that Karma, by itself as a fact inherent in the soul, eternal with it and as operative on the destinies of the soul is all that, by virtue of an eternal God eternally willing. If God is capable of willing something in time has definitely less the more greater when He can will things from eternity. This is called the omnipotence, the power of God. With this basis then of God's eternal will, there is nothing contradictory or interfering with God's paramountcy. If

the Christian in order to forest God with all power demands to Karma being owned by the soul, is he then prepared to transfer all Karma to God and in order to maintain that God must create soul Karma and all in time? Then the soul is vicariously of all personal responsibility. It has neither merit nor demerit, rewards and punishments are not for it. A non-eternal will, as creation supposes therefore derogates from God's power rather than enhance and glorify it, as when He is endowed with eternal will. Time limitations on God is then as bad as when, so that of identifying man with God postulated by monism. Karma is not originating in time, and its being so by God's eternal will, reconciles at once, soul's responsibility for his acts (Karma) and God's supreme power to rule over this state of things as long as He may please, and reserving to Himself the power which may be called grace, by which in actual Karma is won, and gather His flock to Himself. Eternal Karma therefore is compatible with sovereign God's Omnipotence, His unrestricted Power and His unconditional Grace. To call in question therefore the power of God to eternally order things is to limit Him. To endow Him with eternal will is to truly conceive of His infinite nature. If it will be contended that Karma, even when neg-

the Name signifying — "We are in Him, and He is in us" — "He is in us" proves the bond between Him and souls, the bond by which He is bound by His Grace to save us. "We are in Him" proves that we can freely and wholly trust Him for all our welfare. Anything less than this trust savours of diffidence, or which otherwise constitutes the rebellious attitude of the soul. On the other hand, to compel God to save us by our importunities, also savours of disobedience and to think that God must be one at our beck and call, is equally impious and disloyal. Absolute trust is when we think of ourselves as destined by Him to serve some mighty purpose of His, and as mere instruments, required in willingness to do His bidding so that what His purpose may be, may be fulfilled. There is no purpose of our own as apart from His. God is the Proprietor and we are His property, of which He alone has the full power of disposal, in other words, He is the Master and we are His vassals." The disciplex asked again, "Sure, what are our Means and our Goal?" The Master said — "Your Saviours are the means, but do not think I am one. In this matter, it is not for me to decide, you must use your own judgment. Again Your Saviours are the goal as well. To serve them eternally is the goal. And these Saviours are one with God as their souls are in rapport with Him, so that to serve

nally willed by God makes God a dependent being, i.e., dependent on Karma, then it may be equally argued that a potmaker who himself collects all materials to make a pot with is dependent on those materials, an enjoyer of food, who himself acquires all the ingredients for the food is dependent on the food, a donor of rice to a needy person, moved to pity by the donor's petitions, is dependent on his pity or the donor's petition. If God is still thought dependent, how can He have the power of bestowing Karma, in other words possess the sovereign gift of grace? When

God shows grace, we cannot say He is dependent upon his grace to save us. Again this eternal Karma is quite compatible with a most independent God. Karma, we said, was act. We must be understood to mean by this term the inherent capacity or potency in the soul to act. This is free will (will idealized into act) in other words, and this is bestowed on the soul by God from eternity. If it is pertinent to say that Karma cannot be eternal, it is as well pertinent to say that God must have been created by somebody. See Śrīnagarāja-Bhava II, 43 "Śūdhine."

<sup>1</sup> Equivalent partially to, 'We live and move and have our being in Him.'

them is to serve Him, and what pleases them pleases Him. Fied your temple of blue (*blaga*) in the *Tirumantra*, your temple of flowers (*pushpa*) in the *Charamastoka* and your temple of bounty (*tyaga*) in the *Devya*<sup>1</sup> I echo but what our Saints have said before.' On hearing these, T Araiyar said "Oh, Sir, after your departure to *Parama-pada* (Heaven), what matters it, if worms, like us, die?" Yāmuna, hearing this, made no reply to such a token of affection, and fearing lest such praise inflame his pride and destroy humility

T Araiyar, Periya-nambi and others went to the Temple and there in the presence of Lord Ranganātha stood revolving in their minds as to what had transpired. Periya-nambi and others said they had decided to give up their lives, if Yāmuna passed away, for they could hardly bear such separation. Ranganātha read their thoughts and a voice came—"I conjure you all not to think in this wise. You must abide by My will as to how long it may please Me to keep men on earth and when I may choose to dismiss them from there. Take Araiyar for your guide after Yāmuna's departure." They all heard this divine mandate, and speeding to Yāmuna related to him the extraordinary occurrence. He said—"I echo the mandate. Grudge me not that celestial bliss into which I am about to enter, nor grudge the service which Ranganātha will demand of you for some time to come after me. But if overcome by grief at having to leave me, you persist in your intention to give up your lives on my account, it will be most hostile to the will of our Masters, Uyyakkondār and others, that a continuous succession of spiritual teachers of your faith shall be maintained. Do not then lose heart. Resigned to His will, live on." They were still unpacified. To put heart into them, the Master continued—"Know these truths again. Endeavour to see no difference between God and God's saints. In God's saints, God Himself is present. On the other hand, know that when you do a service to your disciples, you shall take no credit to yourselves for doing it. The credit belongs

<sup>1</sup> Consult our *Leve of Ashvada* and *Divine Wisdom of Devārda Saints* for explanation of these mysteries.

to the Masters of whom know you are the accredited agents. And when you serve God, think your services are transmitted to Him by the Saints and Sages, whom you succeed. Further, when you dispense to your disciples, let the motive for such dispensing (*i.e.*, imparting instruction or bestowing gifts &c.) be not one of selfishness (*i.e.*, for a return from them of money, or satisfaction of a worldly end). If a spiritual preceptor has such motives, and if he ever consider himself superior in the midst of an assembly of holy men, he deserves to be discarded." The disciples were still dejected, and the Master again continued his discourse thus — "Fix your hearts on Lord Ranganātha. He is your sole End and Aim. Enough, if the first thing you do every morn is to lay a flower at His feet. Here are three objects for your worship — God, the Guru, and His Faithful. In the middle of these three terms centre the ideas of the first and the last terms. This concentrating in a Guru who is sensibly present, will be your means to cross the sea of this world. I commit you then, dear disciples, into the hands of T Araiyar." T Araiyar now addressed the disciples: — "Hearken to the parting words of our Master. Take courage. I also lay it upon you not to think of dying, because the Master leaves us. If you break these commands, you shall forfeit both the Land of Bliss and the Union with the Blessed. After hearing these amazing words of Araiyar, Yāmunāchārya found peace in his soul.

Yāmunāchārya recovered somewhat; and took his bath of health. For joy, they made great feast and in a body proceeded to the Temple to pay honors to Lord Ranga,<sup>1</sup> accompanied by Yāmuna. The curtains across the sanctum was drawn aside. The congregation was full. Yāmuna stood silent for a while before the Deity with folded hands, and then spoke thus — "Strange, is this Heaven? Am I among the Celestials, the Angels?" As he uttered this, the garland of flowers from Lord Ranganātha's neck slipped and dropped on the ground. T Araiyar promptly picked it up and put it on Ālavandār's neck, saying — "I suppose, sire, your wishes are now fulfilled." Dismayed by Ranganātha's with *śrīkām* and *prāsādam*, they all

<sup>1</sup> Ranga is abbreviation for Ranganātha.

returned to Ālavandār's monastery. Here, after seeing every one partake of holy food, Ālavandār prostrated before them all and asked forgiveness of them all for any wrongs. "How can you do wrong, Sire, and what is there for us to forgive?" So saying, Ṭ Araiyar raised him up in reverence. The master now took his food, and went on saying many precious things, knowing that his end was fast approaching.

Something more was yet in store, before God was pleased to take to himself this Pioneer of the Viśiṣṭādvaita Faith. News reached Kāñchi of the critical state of Yāmunācārya's health. Two Śrī Vaiṣṇava<sup>s</sup> hastened to Śrīraṅgam to visit the sage, perhaps for the last time. Yāmunā received the visitors with great earnestness and asked them to tell him how things were going with Rāmānuja. They informed him that owing to an altercation between Yādava and Rāmānuja, the latter had severed his connection with him and was employed solely in the services of Lord Varadarāja. "God has granted my fervent prayers then, and be He praised", cried Yāmunā, elated with joy. He called Periyannambi (= Mahāpārṇa) to his presence and said: - "Here are glad tidings for us. Rāmānuja is happily disconnected from Yādava. Go forth at once to Kāñchi and bring him to me." Mahāpārṇa immediately left.

But Yāmunā in the meanwhile got worse, despite his will to live till Rāmānuja's arrival. And all the disciples were made uneasy, and hoped against hope that the Master might live. It was the month Vaiyāṣi, and the usual temple-jubilations of the season were proceeding. The *arabhris*<sup>1</sup> (closing) day came, and Yāmunā went to the Temple, and paid his last worship and homage to Rāṅganātha, whom, as well as Saint Tirappānāśvār, stationed at His feet, he devoured with his eyes from toe to top, and top to toe. Receiving *tirtha*<sup>2</sup> and *prasāda*,<sup>3</sup> he returned to his monastery; and

<sup>1</sup> Ablution after a sacrificial ceremony.

<sup>2</sup> Water consecrated to the Deity during the worship and distributed to the devotees.

<sup>3</sup> Flowers, food &c., offered to God and distributed to the Faithful.

gathered together all his disciples and temple-authorities round him. He fell prostrate before the assembly, and once more craved their pardon for all his faults. In one voice they cried —“Holy Sure, why speakest thou of faults?” He now addressed them thus —“I beseech ye all to take care of the venerable Araiyar. O ye officers of Ranga’s Shrine! I pray to you to conduct all the several items of worship, such as *mantraprasāpa*<sup>1</sup> to Lord Ranga, punctually, and distribute holy food to all your gurus and holy souls of the place, and to all pilgrims coming from all quarters to visit the Shrine.” “These must be his Last words,” thought all, sorrowing much in their hearts. Turning to Yāmuna, they said —“All shall be done Sure, as you wish.” Sri Yāmuna now assumed the *padmāsana*<sup>2</sup> posture, held his breath, and fixing all his mind and heart on the Holy feet of his Āchārya<sup>3</sup> Manakkāl-Nambi, commanded the disciples to repeat loudly the *Brahmavallī*,<sup>4</sup> *Bhṛigu Vallī*,<sup>5</sup> *Puruṣa-sūkta*,<sup>6</sup> *Archarādi*,<sup>7</sup> *Śānta-vāṇan*<sup>8</sup> &c. And as the moment Abhijit (midday), coupled with Srāvana constellation arrived on the sixth day of Vayāsi, and as trumpets began to blow, the Holy Sage was elevated to Nitya-vibhūti (Eternal Realms)

### *How Ālavandār was interred.\**

Tiruvāranga-p-paramāi Araiyar and others fell to the ground senseless with grief at this bereavement which was so hard to bear. But they had to perform all the services for the departed, and rallying therefore to the task, they bade the

<sup>1</sup> See any work on Yoga.

<sup>2</sup> Spiritual preceptor and guide; called also Guru.

<sup>3</sup> See Taittirīya Upaniṣat.

<sup>4</sup> See Chāndogya Up. and one of the 18 Rahasyas of Lokāchārya.

<sup>5</sup> Tiruvāṇ-moṣi, X, 2-1.

<sup>6</sup> We had thought of omitting the details of this last sacrament administered on Sanyāsins (monastics) But thinking that an account may be of much interest to

Oriental Scholars, we have translated the same as best as we can. Also it is a study in Indian “Magics” which may be interesting to theosophists.

son of the Sage (i.e., son before he took the robe of Sanyāsa) to do what was necessary.

They sprinkled water over the place (*sthala-suddhi*) after sweeping, constructed a fore-poled *manḍapam* (booth or bower)<sup>1</sup>, and adorned it with festoons of *darbha* (sacred grass), and *śaṅkha-nīl* flowers, silk hangings were hung and *chamaras* (*chamras* or streamers) were arranged in tassels. To the four posts were tied young plantain trees with bunches of green arca-nut at the capitals. Fruits of different kinds were hung from the canopy, and a flag hoisted at one corner. To the four faces, East, South, West and North, were hung respectively festoons of tender foliage, of *paṇsa*, *śrāṅgha*, *kāṭṭira*, and *udumbara*. Paddy grain was spread on the floor (of the bier), and *pāṇa-kumbha* (water-filled vessel) was planted in its midst, and four others at the corners. Twelve more vessels were placed outside the bower, at different corners, repeating the Twelve Holy Names, Kēṭava &c. Their necks were wound with *taka*, *śirīṣā*, *darbha*, *viśva-brāhṁa*, and various flowers, these were worshipped after repeating the *Dravya-mantra* along with the names of the *guru-parampara* (the apostolic series), and with the Twelve Holy Names, Kēṭava &c., they were consecrated. Leaving the vessel in the *śaṭupa*-quarter (North-East) called the *Saṅkarahana*-vessel, the four others were taken up, and with them they lavied the body of the Sage after the *panch-dhātva* (the five articles of milk, butter, honey, cards and coconut-water) ablution was over, repeating the *Purnānandā* all the time. The gentry of the place (*madatis*) now took up the remaining twelve vessels outside the bier, and ablutions were performed with these after presenting the assembled magnates with rolled betel and nut (*paṇa-sapari*) and obtaining their permission, after dextro-ambulating them. The place at the outer-door was next cleaned with cow-dung, and over the space so consecrated, rice grain was spread. A mortar and pestle were brought and sacrificially washed with water, and new pieces of cloth were tied to them. Turmeric

<sup>1</sup> The bier of the Āryans.



was placed in the mortar. *Dīns* (or maid-servants) stamped with the holy *Śāstra* and *Śaṁkha*—then consecrated to Vishnu draped themselves in washed garments and decked themselves according to the occasion, and going round the Holy Trivikraman Street, approached the door, and prostrating before the holy assembly, with their leave, the *Mīru*-god-representing pebble was taken up, and repeating the Twelve Holy Names, the turmeric in the mortar was pounded, called *Srī Chārna*. Now came Araiyar and others. They draw on the paddy a figure of earth with its nine divisions (*bhārat-khanda* &c). At the eight corners of this space were placed eight vessels filled respectively, with holy powders, holy anguents, holy scents, holy flowers, holy *laja* (fried rice), holy milk, holy cards, and holy water, and decked with the buds of *darbha*, *savatha* &c., repeating *Draṅga-mantra* all the while. To the East, they placed a winnow-basket filled with huskless *laja*, to the West a vessel filled with *Srī-Vaishnav*-foot-washed water, to the North, money and other presents to be distributed to the *Srī-Vaishnavas*, to the South, a golden platter filled with the garland, raiment, &c., worn by Lord Ranganātha. Then prostrating to the sanctified image of the Sage, they went round it, and rehearsed *Tiru-p-pallādu*, *Kanninnu-viṛuttāmbu*, *Sūzb-viṛuttāmbu mukil*.<sup>1</sup> Araiyar then went round the holy streets of Srirangam with music, chanting the *Tiru-viṛuttam* and coming back to the monastery, sang the finishing hymns. Then the eight vessels of holy milk &c., were emptied over the Sage's body, which was then adorned with Lord Ranga's gifts of garland, raiment and other things. They all then distributed among themselves as *prauda*, the remnants of all that was offered to the sage, and earnestly gazed at his figure so as to distinctly retain it in their hearts for ever afterwards. They then threw themselves at the Sage's feet which they devoutly pressed against their eyes, hearts and heads, and now completely overcome, gave vent to their grief which they could not control, by torrents of tears track-

<sup>1</sup> See our Lives of Āchāryas.

ling down their cheeks, and sent forth loud lamentations. The worthies of the place pressed round the mourners, and by kind words assuaged their grief. They then lifted the hier, the Sage seated in it, on to a stretcher (or litter), which they bore reverently on their shoulders, and carried in splendid procession in the streets, conches blowing, music discoursing, and men and women setting up a sacred dance. The Prabandhas were recited in the front, Veda-pārāyana bringing up the rear. White cloths were laid in the streets in front of the procession, the members of which bore sugar-cane sticks in their hands, and carried bright vessels filled with water on their heads. As the procession wended its way, *lija* flowers and scented powders were broadly showered over all, the vestal virgins of the sanctuary bearing torches aloft and leaping. *Chāmaras* (chowries) waved on either side, and white cloths were brandished in the air<sup>1</sup>. And to crown all, bugles and trumpets proclaimed as it were — “The Great Sage Ālavandār, the Defender of our Faith, has gone forth to Heaven.” After thus peregrinating the Holy Streets, the Sage was carried to *Tirakkaramban-jaras*, a spot close by the South bank of Coleroon (Kolladam) river in the North, and there purifying the spot with the unused water of the Sackarahapa vessel (kept in reserve), all the sacramental ritual enjoined for *Sanyāsins* (monastic order)<sup>2</sup> was gone through punctiliously. The Sage was now duly installed in a cavern made in the ground. We shall leave the elders and dignitaries of the temple thus busy, and turn for a moment to events which were in the meantime transpiring in Kāñchi.

<sup>1</sup> Cloth is folded at one end and held in the hand, the other end flourished in the air, producing a circle or the figure of an umbrella.

<sup>2</sup> Consult *Teludharma-Samuchaya* by Yādava.



farers. They said that Yāmuna was no more. This news made Mahā-pūrṇa and Rāmānuja distraught, and the shock prostrated them and struck them senseless. Recovering somewhat, they wept inconsolable tears, as all their plans were foiled, and hopes blasted. An irreparable loss, it was. Mahāpūrṇa found Rāmānuja disconsolate, and fearing worse consequences, forgot his own grief for the moment in order to pacify Rāmānuja, in the manner, it is said, that ‘in the sword-cut, the enemy does not die; it forgets its’<sup>1</sup> Breathing breath somewhat, he exhorted him thus: “Take heart, Rāmānuja! knowest thou not the saying—*प्रेतक्षेपदृष्टिमानि भवन्ति वृद्धतपसि। शत्रोक्षेपवन्ते तु क्षणिकमपि विमानसः*” i.e. “Obstacles to rising attack even great men; but when vice sets in, obstacles flee somewhere!” and raising Rāmānuja in his arms, led him by the hand to where the Sage Yāmuna was lying in state. “I have at least been able to see this,” said Rāmānuja, and drank as it were, with his eyes, the Holy Figure, but as he scanned it up and down, he discovered to his surprise that three of the five fingers of the right palm of the Sage were cloncd. He turned round to the assembly and questioned them about this strange sight. “We never marked this before, Sir,” they said. Rāmānuja reflected for an instant, and imagining that the Sage might have some ardent wish in his mind unsatisfied, which he probably so indicated, asked the bystanders if they were aware of any specific wishes of the Sage expressed to them at any time in the course of his religious talks with them. “We are not particularly aware of any such directly,” they said, “but indirectly we know that he often used to say that he wished very much to see three things perpetrated. *Firstly*, gratitude must be shown to the memory of Krishna-Vyāsa and Parāśara. *Secondly*, a tribute of love should be paid to St. Nammāchvār. And *thirdly*, Vyāsa Sūtras or Brāhma-Sūtras must be commented on to bring out the real Viśiṣṭādvaita sense contained in them.”

<sup>1</sup> *Prasiddhānta* means, organic motion, in other words, if it may be so called, a Trinity in Unity. Read our Bhagavadgītā with Rāmā-

nuja's commentaries, Pra. M. Han-  
gubhaya's *Śrī Bhāṣya*, and Dr.  
Theiser's Introduction to Vedānta-  
Sūtras, Sanskrit bhāṣya.

Rāmānuja heard this and said "O Holy Sage," addressing his Figure, "if this is thy mind, I promise I shall carry it out, provided I have the health, provided thy grace is on me, and provided God grants my prayers." No sooner this was said than the three bent fingers of the Sage opened out, as if to say 'aye.' The whole assembly was witness to this miracle, and in one voice they all declared — "Sure, doubt not that the Sage's grace is fully on you, the very power and glory of his spirit will enter into you, you are the next fit successor to him for the evangelical work of our Faith. We all anoint you here for the task." Rāmānuja lovingly and steadily gazed at the Holy Figure of the Sage, and contemplating Him to his fill, pressed His feet to his heart and eyes, and bathing in the river—as the last service rendered to the departed: took leave of Mahā-Pārna and started immediately back for Kānoht, not caring to visit Lord Ranga, on account of the sore disappointment which had been caused. It is chronicled of Rāmānuja that he often used to express to his holy assembly that if he had but been permitted for one single day to be in the living company of Sri Yāmuna, he would have constructed a staircase to Heaven and procured free admission to all thereto.

The magnates of the place then did the remaining part of the interment, conducted with due obsequial liturgy and in due course raised a cenotaph (*brindāraṣam*)<sup>1</sup> and *manḍapam*<sup>2</sup> over the site. Memorial verses were thus sung:—

श्रीरामविभक्तदिव्यं वन्देत्कार्यकोविदः ।  
 वस्तुद्वारा न्यायो विरक्तोयातुनोऽपक्वः ॥  
 कल्पदम्भोद्भवान् विवस्तवोवकल्पकः ।  
 वस्तुतत्त्वपुरस्कृतोऽयमुद्वेगमागिनम् ॥

सिंहासनं कृत्वा शिखरवेदिस्थिभुज्जगत्पथि यदितनाम्पुनी-रपौनम् ।  
 गङ्गाविजयजलधि पतिगदितुल्यमङ्गानिल इदम् । चिन्तय यातुनार्थम् ॥

<sup>1</sup> An ornamental short pedestal with a tulsi plant planted on top.

<sup>2</sup> A stone pavilion over (1).

## CHAPTER X.

## RÂMÂNUJA AND KÂNCĪ-PŪRṆA.

Râmânûja, with a heavy heart reached Kâncġi, and recounted the events he had first witnessed, to Kâncġi-pŭrṇa. Pŭrṇa mourned much over the loss of his *Āchārya*, aggravated by the thought that all the projects they had formed in their minds were thus frustrated, but reviving, comforted Râmânûja by saying:—"Lord Varada is all-knowing and all-powerful. Let us submit to His will. He will make good our loss by appointing you in his stead, for our Faith." So saying, he conducted *Sri-chāṭṭa-paripilawa*,<sup>1</sup> and *Tiru-v-adhyayana*<sup>2</sup> for his *Āchārya*.

Râmânûja again employed himself as before in the *Tiru-manjara*<sup>3</sup> service to Lord Varada, and as friendship and respect for Kâncġi pŭrṇa deepened, he found much spiritual worth in this staunch devotee of Lord Varada. One day, Râmânûja earnestly begged of him to become the sponsor for his soul. "Come, Holy Râmânûja!" said Pŭrṇa, "You desire this of me, because you think I am worthy of such position, but know that I am an unworthy non-entity, whom Lord Varada has perhaps chosen to think of as some body. And you are evidently intent on acting on the principle—

किमप्यज्ञाभिज्ञायन्ते योगिनस्सर्वयोगिषु।

मन्वदितान्मयावानां वैश्वकिन्यङ्कुलादिकम् ॥<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Yogis (or spiritual men) are born among all castes, and no caste-odium shall hold in their cases, for they have seen their souls' Lord*

This dictum holds good as regards our soul-relation, but it cannot be applied as regards our external conditions of birth and social polity as ordained by the Scriptures (*Vedas*).

<sup>1</sup> The ceremony of the tetrastich-powder (note p. 53), applied to the face.

<sup>2</sup> The funeral ceremonies of the *Sri-vaiṣṇavas*, when the *Prabandhas* are recited antiphocally, and a great feast is given.

<sup>3</sup> Carrying water-pots for ablution-ceremony to the Deity.

<sup>4</sup> *Bharedraja-Baṅkāt*, I, 44.

You shall not therefore externally profess to me bonds which militates against the typical social system of *Varna* and *Āśrama*.<sup>2</sup> Yours is *Brahma* body and mine a *Vaśya* body, and as long as these last, we must respect temporary distinctions for the sake of the safety of our social fabric, which we cannot violate without injury.

<sup>2</sup> *Varna*—the four typical castes of *Brāhmin*, *Kṣatriya*, *Vaiśya* and *Śūdra*. *Āśrama*—the four typical orders of life, viz., *Brāhmacharya* (Student), *Grihastha* (householder), *Vānaprastha* (anchorite), and *Saṅgha* (monastic). A recent speech by Mr. N. N. Ghose at the Hare Anniversaries Meeting (1924) was important as bearing on the vexed question of caste in India, which the Christian will not understand. He said: "The division into castes cannot be understood by any one who does not realize that all Hindu institutions were inspired by one principle. It was not political expediency, not social convenience, not the happiness of the greatest number and the development of fighting capacity. Material good was a tardy late end. The ruling principle was the spiritual elevation of man: the perfection of character, realization of the self. For the purpose of spiritual evolution a segregation of classes and occupations was considered necessary. The *Brāhmins*, for instance, were to be devoted to religious work and meditation and the function of teaching, and so on with the rest. It was no mere division of labour that was thus accomplished. It was an institution meant to prevent the spiritual degradation of men by the mixing up of *pure* and *coarser* spiritual natures. The four leading castes were marked off from each other by characteristics that could not be mistaken. The division was not arbitrary. All experience shows

that men are not equally endowed on the spiritual side. Then it has to be remembered that the law of *Karma* was one of the root conceptions of the caste-system. Men were born into a particular caste by their *Karma* of a previous life. Men of lower castes could go up to the higher in another life if they had made spiritual progress enough in this life. No mere intellectual qualifications or material conditions would raise a man to a higher caste. Each man was born into the caste for which he was destined by his own conception. There was room enough for advancement and usefulness within the limits of his own caste. But he was not to be permitted to spoil his own breed by marrying in a lower spiritual plane, or spoil the breed of a higher caste by marrying on a higher plane. Modern life may make it difficult or impossible to carry out these ideas. But in them is to be found the interpretation of an ancient system which has perished and provided men whose souls are separated from those of our ancient ancestors. Not muscles and intellect, not happiness, not political expediency, but spiritual perfection and purity were the only end." The warning voice against promiscuous intercourse and admixture of castes is found in the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, I, 40 to 44; which may be read by all the devotees of this Holy Bible, and laid to heart before venturing to anathematize the caste-institution of India.

Rāmānuja admitted the legality and expediency of the caste system, and yet he felt it ought to be disregarded in special cases where such spiritually advanced souls as Kāñchi-pūrṇa's were concerned. He therefore resolved the next day to invite Pūrṇa to his house for a repast. "Accept, Sir, an entertainment in my hut," prayed Rāmānuja. "Most gratefully", said Pūrṇa, not to disappoint him. Rāmānuja was rejoiced at the prospect of obtaining the remnants of food eaten by a spiritual elder, albeit he belong to a low class in society. Going home, he ordered his wife to prepare a sumptuous meal for a distinguished guest. And he himself bathed, performed all the ceremonies ordained for the householder, carried the daily-service-water to Lord Varada, and performing worship to his household Lord, also Varada, left home to bring his guest to his door. He went by the South Street, and turned West towards the retreat of Pūrṇa. But Pūrṇa had already left his place, taken another direction, prayed to Lord Varada as usual, and doing his daily services there, had proceeded to the cottage of Rāmānuja. Here, not finding him, he begged the wife to give him food immediately as he had to return to the Temple for urgent service. She did so, and he left. She then pushed away the leaf, from which Pūrṇa had eaten, by means of a stick, purified the place with water and cowdung and considering herself impure by this act, bathed again. Rāmānuja finding Pūrṇa absent from his cloister had retraced his steps to his hut, and finding that his wife had bathed for a second time, asked her why? She said "Sure, your Śiṣya (non-Brahman) guest came and having eaten is gone. Being a low caste man, I have purified the place where he ate, and have myself bathed." "Ignorant woman!" he cried in anger "what hast thou done? How thou hast frustrated my plans!"

"What shall I do next?" Rāmānuja pondered, "what I had wished has failed. Perhaps it is God's will that I should not violate caste restrictions even in special cases. Be it so." And he again betook himself to Pūrṇa's cloister. "Sir! pardon me for constraining you to do a thing against your will, but now do me another favour. I have a few doubts in my



mind. I beg of you to have them solved by Lord Varada, whose beloved worshipper you are." "Willingly I shall submit them to Him," he promised Rāmānuja. That night, when all the formal duties of the temple were over, Mahāpūrṇa stood before Lord Varada in silent contemplation, hands folded. "I think thou hast something to ask of me," Lord Varada said. "Yes, Most High! Rāmānuja has a few doubts, which he has asked me to submit to you and obtain answers, some doubts, he has not told me what." "I know them," said Varada, "he is asking me these doubts, in the manner I myself once asked Śāṇḍipani<sup>1</sup> for knowledge. He knows the sweets of God-service by birth-right, and knows my will and acts up to it. He has learnt many things and in many quarters. Now he has six doubts in his mind. Here are the six answers thereto:—

1. *I am the Supreme Truth (para-tatvam),*
2. *I and soul are different (bheda),*
3. *By faith shall men reach Me, their salvation*
4. *Thought of Me at time of death (antima- smṛiti)*  
*is not compulsory (on My faithful),*
5. *Release from bondage (moksha) follows immediately*  
*on death (of body),*
6. *Choose Mahāpūrṇa for your Āchārya.<sup>2</sup>*

Kānchī-pūrṇa reverently received this message and with <sup>1</sup>draw. The next morning, he hailed Rāmānuja with intense joy and communicated to him the divine message. "Were these your doubts, Sir?" he asked. "Yes, your Holiness. I prostrate to you for it most heartily," said Rāmānuja. Pūrṇa was struck by this strange coincidence, and henceforth, (sunting the action to the word) looked upon Rāmānuja as the destined Saviour.

<sup>1</sup> *Band* Krishnāvātāra is Vishnu-purāṇa.

<sup>2</sup> This is put in a verse thus:—

(1) बहमेकवर्तनं (2) दर्शनमेवमेवम् ।  
(3) व्याप्यपुनानिस्सयात् (4) नित्यमस्मृतिवर्तनम्,  
(5) देहावसानेमेवम् (6) महापूर्कसमाप्यम् ॥

## CHAPTER XI

## RÂMÂNUJA'S CALL TO SRÎRANGAM.

Leaving Râmânuya at Kâncî for a while, we shall turn back to Srîrangam. The Faithful of the place felt now a great blank amongst themselves and in their hearts, after the passing away of Âlavandâr, their Spiritual Guide. How to fill up this vacancy, was their haunting thought. They resorted to Mahâpârma and prayed to him to devise proper means for a fit successor. Mahâpârma looked at them and said: "Forget ye the past signs given us? Did not Âlavandâr himself, while he was in Kâncî, point out Râmânuya to us as his successor? Do ye not remember the miracle of the closed fingers of that Sage, opening at his utterance? Râmânuya then is our successor. Our Achârya could not have been mistaken in his wise selection." "Well said, well said," cried the whole community, "we pray to you, Sir, to bestow your serious thought on this matter, kindly seek out Râmânuya and prepare him for his high office, and conduct him hither, to Srîrangam." Mahâpârma gladly assented, and immediately made preparations to start. His wife was to accompany him. He went to Lord Raaga, and obtaining his leave to proceed on the holy errand left Srîrangam, and reached by rapid marches Madhurântakam (near Kâncî), and there stopped for the day in the Shrine of *Êri-kûta-parasûrî*, or *He who protects the tank*.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This tank is noted as under the special protection of the Local Deity, Sri-Kâma, and hence He is called the "Tank-Guard." Even recently, a story is thus told — "The incident to be related happened about 25 years ago, at Madhurântakam, a small town, a few miles to the south of Madras. Those were the days of John Company, and a Collector of the name of Mr Price ruled the district of Chingalpet, of which Madhurântakam is a Taluk. Soon after he came to his Office, he had to superintend certain repairs in the big reservoir of the place, which was

looked to by many a village around, for the watering of their green fields.

Its storage capacity was immense, and every year after the copious rainfall the vast volume of water would wash away the Kalinga' (waste-weir) on the rough, stone-built outlet of the tank, thus defying every effort to find the needed element to the required quantity. More than once during his regime, Mr. Price re-built the thing stronger than of old, as he thought, but all in no purpose the next rains would mercilessly laugh away the sacred structure.



accompanied by Lord Varada. Taking leave of Him and Kanchi purya, he arrived at Madhukotaham. They met

knowing how time and all living beings shut themselves into their boundaries and shut out.

Two days before this came. He then came and roused at Madhukotaham anxious to test the halcyon tide for the fourth time. He had not forgotten his speech at the temple a few months ago. Indeed long ago, occasional raindrops had reached him through his menials, that the people at large believed that the oft-recurring danger to the lake was due to the irreparable act of expunction of the temple managers over its affairs. This was in part what induced him the other day to say the words he said, even though highly. Well he was thinking of all this as he was moving on his land on the third night of the storm. It was a tremendous down-pour that day. Ever since noon there had been an interminable flow was brought to Mr. Price that evening that the big reservoir was nearly full. It was eleven at night. It must be awful. Indeed a house, the enormous volume of the great rush of vast raindrops of water rushed to the lake. He was sure it was the breaking up of the outlet. Alas! the storm's fury increased. He could restrain his impatience no longer. He wanted to see how great the damage was. Year after year this work was proving futile and a waste of money to the Government, a waste of funds of the great kingdom danger to public security were the results. This year he had employed experts and great care had been bestowed in the work. He would go and see. Amidst all this, the small heaven of curiosity was working in him over the promise made by the Brahmins, of the Duff's profes-

tion. But what a fool I am said he and started to his room of course. He was of his parents a brave man having arms and knowing he was at the camp which stood on the top of the hill and beyond was out of sight. It is pitch dark. The low noise of rolling waters over the shore as they come across the land. But it is that of the majestic roll of waters contained within bounds and not that of great masses dashing beyond them. Suddenly he remembered the Collector's words, staring his eyes in the darkness of the sea he is out, could destroy a blue, ethereal radiance rising instant above the horizon. He felt surprised and a little thrilled. He advanced and when near the place where he looked! He stopped short, his whole frame thrilled, and he was spell-bound. Large drops of sweat stood on his brow. Not master of himself then he threw down his umbrella, with one arm he swept his hat off, and in the wet, oozy ground overrun with pools of water, he suddenly fell on his knees, and prayed, fervently and long all the time not removing his eyes from the place. His servants observing the sudden action of their master were thunderstruck. They thought he was suddenly gone mad. They rushed to him, threw up all their light to reach him. Then he seemed to recollect them. He got up and cried out "Don't you see my dear boys you know where I do you stare at me? Don't you see those glorious translucent by the stand by there on either side of the Duff's with down arrows? How splendid they are? What magnificent people toward me? How beautiful their faces. They smile at me, they have reached."

Rāmānuja was thrilled with joy and surprise at this unexpected meeting. He exclaimed — "O my heart! seem thou how thy desire has met thee?" and prostrated before Mahāpārma. Mahāpārma was equally overjoyed at finding that his mission was so soon and so readily to be fulfilled, and raised Rāmānuja, fondly holding him to his breast. "Here and now," prayed Rāmānuja, "admit me as your disciple and teach me all that is good for my soul." Mahāpārma said "So near are we to the Holy Hastigiri", where Lord Varada resides, we shall go there for the initiation you so much desire." "No, Sir, not a moment is to be lost," said Rāmānuja, "is not the example of our Yamañchārya still fresh, viz., his having breathed his last just when I was about to see him? This is a warning against waste of time. Are not our lives here of lightning duration?" So saying, he dropped at his feet again. Pārma raised him up

(Note from page 64—*contd.*)

The truth dawned after all on the man. How could it be otherwise? They were Hindus, the time, place, the fact of the Collector's wager with the Brāhmanas, all combined to flash on them the truth! The Englishman has seen the blessed vision of glorious Rima and Lakshmana, espousing the Devī's cause, "Jai, Jai, Śita-Māma" cried they, "our Lord hath seen the vision. And so crying, they rushed into the sleeping town. The inhabitants awoke "What devil's riot is this?" cry they. Then the fact becomes known. And all crying in a body, "Jai, Jai Śita-Rima, rush to the Collector's camp. There he is seated in the front, bright light before him. He seems composed now. Grave and dignified he looks. Some of the important people that throng to him, he receives and makes them sit. "Gentlemen," says he, "why come in this night here, and why so much excitement? The outlet is not broken, nor will it ever be. I solemnly tell you I have received a lesson to night, that

I will never forget. I always more or less believed that God was not the monopoly of the Christian Church. I am sure of it now. So do you all go to your homes. Early in the morning shall the Devī's temple begin to rise.

So said he and dismissed them. The temple was built, and now in its front it has engrained as it on a stone, how it was built by Mr Thomas Price, Collector, in the year 1804.<sup>1</sup> And there are grey boards now, who took of it solemnly of an evening, from one of whom the writer learnt it. [E. E. *Oriental India College Magazine*, p. 173 & Vol. IV 1901].

The following inscription appears on the stone below of the Devī's Temple in Tanjore — *Jada darasam Kumpana pāpā Kūlikar Leonal Price daras arapala* (Collector Leonal Price) and another inscription is near the waste weir. [Read the kindly letter to me dated 18th October 1904, by Mr P. Seshagiri Rao, Tahsildar of Madhavakottam.]

<sup>1</sup> Kāñchi, (Caujervaram).

lovingly "What zeal! indeed," he said, "it shall be as you wish." And leading him to the Holy Vakula tree near the (Tank-Guard) Temple, and placing him on his right, performed all the sacraments of initiation as laid down in the Pāṇchārātra-Sāstra.<sup>1</sup> That process is briefly thus —

'Preparatory discipline for mastric initiation requires the mark of the dāms (Chakra), or of the five weapons (of Vishnu, viz., Chakra, Śankha, Gada, Khadga and Chāpa) being stamped (on the several parts of the body), with appropriate *mantras*. This is enjoined for the sake of rendering the *mantras* imparted, efficacious. The wearing of these *chakra* and other marks, is to signify that the soul has been wedded to God, as the wearing of bangles &c. by a damo, signifies that she is joined in all faith to a husband. The disciple (or the postulaut) shall sit before the Gura, numble, with joined palms. The Gura shall meditate on his Gura and all the others preceding him apostolically, and impress the *chakra* symbol on the disciple's right shoulder, and then placing his right palm on the head and the left palm on the heart of the disciple, and looking at him with eyes beaming with grace, shall repeat the Gem of Mantras (*mantra-ratna*), and make the disciple repeat the same with him, along with the *Chāndāśa* and the *East* attached to the *mantra*." In this manner, Mahāpūrṇa, placing Rāmānuja to his right, called to mind his Gura Ālavandār's feet, and speaking in the right ear of Rāmānuja, imparted to

<sup>1</sup> मन्त्रोत्पत्तिरिति चर्चम् मन्त्रोत्पत्तिरिति च ।

चक्रस्य चारुयानं मन्त्रोत्पत्तिरिति च ।

चक्रादिचारुयानं परमात्मनोत्पत्तिम् ।

पतिवत्तनोत्पत्तिरिति चक्रादिचारुयानम् ।

मन्त्रोत्पत्तिरिति चक्रादिचारुयानम् ।

मन्त्रोत्पत्तिरिति चक्रादिचारुयानम् ।

मन्त्रोत्पत्तिरिति चक्रादिचारुयानम् ।

मन्त्रोत्पत्तिरिति चक्रादिचारुयानम् ।

मन्त्रोत्पत्तिरिति चक्रादिचारुयानम् ।

मन्त्रोत्पत्तिरिति चक्रादिचारुयानम् ।

<sup>2</sup> We had again thought of omitting these details, but Oriental Scholars may require to know what

sacraments make a formal or external Srivishnuva, like the sacraments of the Christian Religion, &c.

him the Mantra-Gem (Dvayam) with all its adjuncts, and solemnly ordained him thus — "I adjure thee, holy son, most solemnly, to deem thyself as the next appointed of Yāmunā. He has departed, know thou, placing his holy feet on thy head, consecrating thee to fulfil His holy Mission on earth, in the same way as Rāma, placing His sandals on the head of Bharata, departed to the forest to carry on the work of His Kingdom." Next to Yāmunāchārya thus, succeeded Rāmānuja, Mahāpūrṇa playing but the part of an instrument of the former in ordaining Rāmānuja. This succession, Pillai Amudanār or Tuuvarangatt-amudanār<sup>1</sup> recorded in his Rāmānuja-nūtt andādi.<sup>2</sup> Rāmānuja, reverently asked Mahāpūrṇa to explain to him the triplicity, viz (1) *Pramāṣa* (2) *Pramēya* and (3) *Pravartita*, or literally the (1) measure, (2) the measured, and (3) the measurer. Pūrṇa explained thus — "*Pramāṣa*, or the measure of God knowledge is the authoritative Revelations, the essence of which is contained in the Dvaya-Mantra, (or the Mantra which explains the dual nature viz., the Mother-Father, of the Deity); *Pramēya* or that which is measured by this measure of Revelations, is God Himself, the Mother-Father, *Pravartita* or the measurer is the prophet or seer who knows God and so knowing, makes others to know Him. This measurer is yourself." So saying, they both paid obeisance to Rāma, the Task-Guard, saying — "Thou art really Rāma, or He who *delights* the world. By Thy blessing, there shall be one undivided faith in the world, so that all men may love each other and live in peace. This is Rāma." They now both left for Kānchi to visit Lord Varada. Kānchi-pūrṇa met them on the way in due humility and conducting them to Kānchi and to the Hastigiri Shrine, invoked Lord Varada to manifest Himself to the worthy visitors, even as Rāma-mitra called upon Ranga to manifest Himself to Ālavandār.<sup>3</sup> They were blessed with the Beatific Vision of God which they rapturously enjoyed.

<sup>1</sup> Disciple and contemporary to Rāmānuja.

<sup>2</sup> Read Verse 31 — "*Nadim* etc." This work sets forth the glory of Rāmānuja and his mission on earth.

<sup>3</sup> Read Yāmunāchārya's *Life*, ante.

Rāmānja led his Guru Mahāpūrṇa and his consort to his house, and accommodated them in the upper story, providing all other comforts necessary. For six months, Rāmānja sat at the feet of his Guru, and received from him important lessons on the Drāvida Scriptures and other Mystery-lore of the Śrī-vaishṇava Faith.

On a certain morning two Śrī-vaishṇavas came to Rāmānja, and did him the service of anointing with oil. They asked for food as they were hungry. Rāmānja inquired of his wife, if she had any food remaining from over-night. "No, not so much as a grain of it," she said; but Rāmānja suspected her sincerity, and bidding her go on other business, entered into the cook room and examined the vessels, and lo, he found food hidden away. He called his wife and angrily spoke to her thus — "Art thou capable of this, that when hungry souls are waiting at the door, thou hast? Is there worse meanness than, in this wise, refusing food to those who come in dire need? And a he added to the meanness! Oh, un!"

On another day, Rāmānja was out for his morning ablutions. His wife and the Guru's wife met at a well for drawing water. An altercation ensued between them as to the comparative purity of the pots they held. Pūrṇa was observing this. As soon as his wife returned home, he thought it wise to pack up immediately and actually left Kāñchi for Srirangam, after soundly chastising his wife for the unpleasant occurrence, of which he held her to be the cause. Rāmānja returned home, and as usual went to visit his Guru, but he found him not. He asked the people about the place to account for his sudden absence. They said — "Sire, your lady and your Guru's lady had a quarrel near the well over a pot. The Guru took his wife to task for giving occasion for this, and thinking that if he stayed longer under your roof, her conduct might again give rise to unpleasantness, he considered it expedient to leave the place forthwith. Rāmānja was white with rage on hearing this, and recovering, addressed his wife thus — "Thrice art thou sinner, base woman! My Guru Kāñchīpūrṇa came and took his food under my roof in my



absence, and thou tookest the very leaf from which he ate as unholy and polluting. This was thy first guilt. Hungry souls came craving for food. Thou didst deny it and thou didst lie. This was thy second guilt. And now thou hadst had the audacity to pick a most unseemly quarrel with my venerable teacher's consort. This is thy third and crowning crime. No more art thou fit to remain with me. Thou art a worldly woman, blind to spiritual interests. Take all this money, for that is thy meet share. That is the stuff that well suits a shrew and a scold like thee.<sup>1</sup> Well do the Śāstras say — "Woman is at the bottom of all crime."<sup>2</sup> They further declare — "When house-keeping suits not, enter the monastery"<sup>3</sup>, for that is the true house where strangers and guests find a ready welcome, but thou hast defiled my roof by thy unworthy conduct offensive to my sense of propriety and decency. It is meet therefore that thou shouldst return to where thou camest from." So saying he swiftly despatched her to her parents' abode.

"This world is hateful. Indeed, I must abjure all concern with it," thus did Rāmānuja seriously reflect. It is said — "Bathe in the holy pond called Ananta-raras, shaded by the cupola of the Holy Temple, resolving that nothing in the world bestows real bliss. All sins shall depart. Seek Lord Varada as the Refuge, and one shall gain the blessed regions of Vishnu."<sup>4</sup> And so Rāmānuja bathed in the Ananta-pond, and resolved to become a Sanyāsin. It is laid down: "One shall receive the holy order of the Sanyāsin either from a mendicant Sanyāsin or from God direct"<sup>5</sup> And thus resolving

<sup>1</sup> Cp. Yājñavalkya and his two wives in the *Bṛihadāraṇya*: Up.

<sup>2</sup> पद्मानामकराक्षेयं [Garuda-Purāṇa]. These incidents show how Rāmānuja was against caste-pride.

<sup>3</sup> "Hṛayaṁ-śleṣaṁ sara-raras."

<sup>4</sup> अनन्तररासेनात्वा विमानःकायवान्विते।

विमुक्तस्सर्वपापेभ्यो विधुलोकसमपन्नतिः॥

सम्पद्भूगाङ्गयेत्यार्ये विगासकस्तत्किञ्चिदः।

निरस्तेतभोगाक्षो वरदः सत्सङ्गतः॥ [Brāhma, Hṛadagiri-Māhātmya, 15-22 ff.]

<sup>5</sup> यद्योक्तकारिबन्धिं भगवन्त्वा [Yati-dharma samuccaya].

Rāmānuja betook himself to Varada, and there prostrating before Him, prayed thus : "O Granter of boons! Warder of death! Bestower of the Land of the Angels! I have seen enough of all the varieties of worldly delusions, fathers and mothers, wives and children and all worldly goods. I feel sure that these ties block one's way to Thee, Thine and Spiritual Preceptors. I value them not; I value Thee and Thy Holy Blessed feet alone. Grant me deliverance from those and service to these. Invert me therefore with all the insignia of the Vaishnava ascetic: the Triple-staff, the Holy-thread, the Under-cloth, the Loin-cloth, the Upper-cloth and the begging hoop (or rope-swing for receiving alms)" So did Rāmānuja supplicate. Lord Varada was pleased, and through His official agent (archaka), He was pleased to grant his prayers, and gave him from that day the name of Rāmānuja-muni. "My own Rāmānuja, then shalt don the robe of the Sanyāsin and serve Me", was the command given through Kānchi-pūrta. Receiving this command in due humility, Rāmānuja retired and became a Sanyāsin from that day.

<sup>1</sup> लिख्यते वैष्णवसिद्धि विधायां युक्तसामर्थ्यम् ।

निर्याससर्वधर्माणां मितिवेदानुज्ञासनम् ॥

विदग्धमुपवीतश्च दसन्मौलीनवेष्टनम् ।

शिवधकवचमित्येतत् किमृथास्वरायुषम् ॥ [Teli-dharma-samuccaya].

## CHAPTER XII

## RÂMANUJA'S CHIEF DISCIPLES, &amp;c.

So Râmanuja had now weaned himself from the world. The discipline and duty routine ordained for monastics, he went through punctiliously, and was glad within himself to find that Yâmunachârya's eyes of grace, which had fallen on him, had wrought wonderful results in removing all obstacles in the way of serving God alone, and in causing all conveniences for leading such a life. It was time now to think how best to carry out the (post-mortem) wishes of that pioneer-sage of the Faith, Sri Yamuna. Alone, he could not accomplish it, he wanted a competent colleague. He could think of no one better fitted than Govinda Bhatta, who had all the threefold qualifications of fidelity (to him), abnegation (of the world), and enthusiastic faith (for spiritual science). But he had turned an arrant Saiva, a zealot in Siva's service at Kâlabasti as already related. Which saint was there to show him that the palm which touched the *lugga* was really stinking? Who would show him that there was the One God whom Scriptures declared as "All-sent and All-saviour?" So he mused, and his thoughts lighted on Tirumâlai Nambi (Sri-mâla-Pûrâ), the venerable worshipper of Venkatesa at Tirupati, learned in the Vedas, versed in the nectareous Prabaandhas, and otherwise possessing spiritual qualities calculated to influence men of Govinda's stamp and redeem them from their wrong ways. He despatched a confidential Sri Vasudhava accordingly to Nambi, (Pûrâ), and to deliver to him a message thus:—"Holy sire! your nephew Vattamâra Govinda Bhatta was my school mate. Influenced by evil associations, his mind went wrong. He is now lost in the thick tangle of the Kâlabasti wilderness. I pray you for my sake to extend your grace to him, and redeem him to your blessed feet."

In the meanwhile, Kûrttiâshvân, called Tirumaru-mârban of the Hârta-family and Mudali-y-andân of the Kandâlai family, heard of Râmanuja having joined the monastic order

They were rejoiced and forthwith proceeding to Kāñchi, fell at his feet and prayed that they may be taken into the Sri-Vaishnava fold by the sacrament of *Pancha-samakara* &c. Rāmānuja welcomed them and ordained them as they desired. And as, stated in "*After receiving the mantra, the Deva shall worship his Āchārya, and in all purity ever remain implicitly in his service*,"<sup>1</sup> they remained devoted to Rāmānuja. (In the sequel, we shall use the Saṅkīrt names of these disciples, viz., Kuraṇātha or Kūresa for Kūrattāzhvān, and Dāsarathi<sup>2</sup> for Mudali-y-andān.) A coterie of pupils were thus gathering round the future Pontiff of the Vaishnava Church.

As to Yādava-prakāśa, a new chapter in his life was about to open. For his mother was a good woman. She was a frequent visitor to Lord Varada, and had won the good graces of Sage Kāñchi-pārma. She had friendly conversation often too with Rāmānuja. All these forces combined to mould her disposition for the New Faith, and at last made her to wish that her son Yādava had also belonged to this band. With this wish strong in her, she was one day mounting the steps to Lord Varada's Shrine, when she overheard some one ejaculating "so be it." She construed this to be good augury for her, and on returning home informed her son of what had happened, and exhorted him to give up his single staff of the ascetic and wear like Rāmānuja, the triple-staff, sacred thread, and śikā (tuft of hair on the head), thereby embracing the Vaishnava faith. For a long time, Yādava had begun to doubt the soundness of *śaśvatam*. Rāmānuja's reasonable and decent interpretations of Vedic texts as against his own, were working strongly in his mind, and, of the greatness of Rāmānuja himself, the *Brāhma-vaśakas*, or the spirit which had possessed the princeps, had clearly proved. The divine succour which God, designated as Rāma, had rendered to Rāmānuja, whom he had beguiled on the sanctimonious pretext of a Kāśi-pilgrimage, and the

<sup>1</sup> अशीत्यवन्मार्चार्चं पूजयेन्मन्त्रिकेदिह ।

आचार्यार्चनं कृत्वा वाचस्पतिकृत्युनि ॥ [Śāstrīya Saṅkīrt ].

<sup>2</sup> See 20, Hierarchic Table in our Lives of Āchārya.

Dāsarathi is nephew (on sister's side) to Rāmānuja.



band<sup>1</sup> " Rāmānuja was mightily pleased at the valuable adherent won to his cause, made Yādava undergo all the sacraments for the Brāhmana over again, such as *Chaula* and *Upasayana*, invested him with the triple-staff, &c., and named him Govinda-jīya, stamped him with the holy symbols of *Śaṅkha* and *Chakra*, gave him the Holy *Mastra*, and enjoined him to write a work on *Yata-dharma*<sup>2</sup> (or the Institutes of monks), showing the harmony that exists among various texts. Govinda-jīya accordingly wrote a work of eleven chapters,<sup>3</sup> each chapter treating of an aspect and submitted the same to Rāmānuja. He read it and expressed his approval of the same. Not long however was Govinda-jīya spared to serve his Āchārya, for he soon after left the earth and drew himself away to the Great Beyond.

Kāreṣa and Dāṣarāthi were much attached to Rāmānuja, who took them through a course of the Two *Mīmāṃsā*s (the two Exegeses on the ritualistic and the contemplative Divisions of the Veda). While such studies were being prosecuted, the tidings travelled to Srirangam of the assumption by Rāmānuja of the *Sanyāsa* order, and other events rapidly succeeding it. Mahāpūrṇa and other disciples of Yāmanāchārya received the tidings with joy, and longed for Rāmānuja's coming to Srirangam, making it his permanent quarters. But they were helpless, and Rāmānuja too had once before in grief and despair, returned from the place without even visiting Lord Ranga, being disappointed at the sudden death of Yāmana. So, they went in a body to Lord Ranga and petitioned to Him to prevail upon His Type at Kāncī,—the Lord Varada—to spare Rāmānuja for them. So a message from Lord Ranga, who granted their petition, was sent to Lord Varada. But a reply came to the effect:—"If it is possible for one to forego his love, I too

<sup>1</sup> तस्मान्निषमंसास्त्वानि सङ्गमोपयुताय च ।

विधीयतोयदायाञ्च तस्मिन्निष्ठा-पुणेति ॥ [*Mādhya*: VI. 13. 30].

<sup>2</sup> Called *Yata-dharma-Samuchchaya*.

<sup>3</sup> तस्मिन्नुद्देशमिदो यतोयोयुव-कर्तव्य ।

महोपासकियाचारे सिद्धयर्थमिति विवक्षितः ॥

याचक्षिणानि संस्कार इत्येवमस्मर्यकः ॥ [*Op*: Col. I. 4-5.]

can part with my Rāmānuja." On hearing this, Malakpūrm and other worthies were much disconcerted, but after some deliberation, determined to depute an elder in person to approach Lord Varada and persuade Him by hymns to grant them Rāmānuja inasmuch as the Lord's very name Varada meant "Grantor." They besought accordingly Tiruvāranga-perumāl Araiyar, the Venerable Elder of the place, to march to Kānchi on their behalf, and so extol Lord Varada as to make Him condescend to grant them Rāmānuja. Araiyar immediately left Srirangam on this holy errand, after obtaining leave to do so from Lord Ranga. On his nearing Kānchi, his relative there by name Varantaram Perumāl Araiyar met him and escorted him to the Holy City, and tended him under his roof as befitted a distinguished visitor. The next morning, in due fashion, Araiyar proceeded to the Temple. Lord Varada had that day taken His august seat in the pavilion called *Kaccāikka-vaytān*, surrounded by the Holy Assembly, Kānchi-pārma stationed before the Lord reverently doing his allotted service of fanning. Rāmānuja stood by his side devoutly uttering the *Devārāja-Aśāṭaka* hymn sung by Pūrṇa. Rāmānuja saw Araiyar, went forward and received him most cordially. "May I be allowed to pay my obeisance to Lord Varada?" enquired Araiyar. Pūrṇa led him to His august presence, in full Holy Council seated, and Araiyar fell prostrate before Him, repeating Yāmunā's verse "Oh, when, O Strider of the Three Spheres, will Thy Lotus-Foot, decked with all the signs such as the discus, bedeck my head?"<sup>1</sup> Rising, he was honored with *tīrtha*, *pradda* and *Srī Sāṭhagopa*. Araiyar then, set to celestial music (*devadāna*), chanted a select number of the Lyrical Psalter of the Ābhvāra (Saints), and as he sang, danced and went into rapture.

"When His faithful song and dance for joy God Himself keeps time," it is said. So, Lord Varada was pleased with

<sup>1</sup> See Life of Yāmunā. He is also called Ranga-nāṭha-Gāyaka, (vide No. 22, Hierarchic Table to our Lives of Saints).

<sup>2</sup> கரையுறவரவாழ்கருங்கயமாபெய்துருவவளமாழ்வரர்.

பெரிசுநன் நயங்கொழுகுநன் கரீசமுர்வியசுநனுரிகனி || [*Śloka-ratna*.]

the devotion of Gāyaka, and vouchsafed to Him all the honors belonging to His Shrine. "Why do I want these?" said Gāyaka, "my wish is not for these. Pray grant me a boon, as Thou art, O God, famous as the 'Boon-Giver.' And so saying, he continued his song and dance with more fervour. Pleased, Lord Varada spoke thus "Ask, my beloved, anything, except Me and My Consorts." "Him, pray grant," readily replied Gāyaka, pointing to Rāmaṇuja, who was close by. "Oh lost," exclaimed the Lord "I wish I had the forethought to include Rāmaṇuja on the side of exceptions. However, son, except Rāmaṇuja, ask for any other boon." "But," remonstrated Gāyaka, "dost Thou retract also like mortals? Are not Thy own words these "Rāma hath no two tongues"? On hearing this, Lord Varada had no alternative but to reluctantly say "Well, we grant you Rāmaṇuja, take him. And we bestow on him the title, Yatūrāja." No sooner was this said, than almost convulsively Gāyaka grasped Rāmaṇuja by the hand and said: "Proceed, Sir." Rāmaṇuja said not a word. He fell prostrate before Lord Varada, and saying "Thy will be done," he, immediately started, not even caring to enter his cloister. As he went, he merely ordered his pupils Kāreṣa and Dāsarathi to bring up his chapel image, Varada. Rāmaṇuja thus followed Gāyaka to Srirangam. Kāreṣa after escorting Rāmaṇuja some way, returned to Kāंची, but Dāsarathi accompanied. Dāsarathi was Rāmaṇuja's mother's son, but he was the only relative whom he retained.

Looking steadily towards Srirangam, his future home—a home, the vestibule of the Eternal Home—with joy bounding in his heart, went Rāmaṇuja. In due time the north branch (Kolladam = Coleroon) of the Kāveri, encircling the Holy Island of Srirangam, was reached. Rāmaṇuja tarried here to take a holy bath and deck his body with the twelve marks, consecrated by the Holy Names of Kēṣava and so forth. In the meanwhile, news had sped to Srirangam of the arrival of the Holy Personage. Mahāpārṣa and other disciples of Yāmunāchārya,

<sup>1</sup> विश्वदेवमित्रवन्दे विश्वदेवमित्रवन्दे ।

विश्वदेवमित्रवन्दे: एवोर्विनिर्वाचने ॥ [Rāmānuja.]



the elders of the place, the monks and acolytes (*śāṅgīs*) and others were rejoiced at this good fortune, and proceeding in a body to the Temple, delivered the tidings to Lord Ranga. Thereupon His Command issued thus: "O my faithful, march ye forth in full congregation, office bearers and all men, laic and cleric, with all the holy paraphernalia of my Temple and every honor, to meet and receive my Rāmānuja." The populace formed itself into a grand procession, which with music discoursing and flags flying, headed by Viśvakarma (= Śānaimudali),<sup>1</sup> streamed forth towards Kolladam even as the celestials and angels, headed by Cherubs and Seraphs<sup>2</sup> go forth from the gates of Heaven to the shores of the *Iravati*<sup>3</sup> river, to meet and welcome the faithful, who have finished their pilgrimage on earth, and are reaching the portals of the Refulgent City of God. They met Rāmānuja, and after mutual exchanges of religious courtesies, the procession turned towards Śrīrangam. Thus led, Rāmānuja crossed the river, neared the *Tirakoti* rampart, and the *Demoderau* turret, where he laid himself at full length on the ground, then rising, he reverently threaded the *Tirumalaṅṇa-Perumāl* Street, (beginning always from the east and turning to the west, by south = *pradakṣiṇā*), and again he went round the inner *Tiruvikramaṅṇa*-Street, reaching in due course the big sacrifice-altar (*baḷa pīṭha*), where he prostrated himself again, then he went to the Mother's shrine, paying homage to Mother Śrīranga-Nāyaki, the blessed Consort of Śrī Ranga, next the *Chandrapuṣkariṇi* pond was reached, where he sipped the holy water, and then wheeling round, the next southern entrance was reached, guarded by Nāyakaṅṇa (gate-watchers), and all the Saints from St. Nammāshvār downwards—who are called the *Prospering Indolents*<sup>4</sup>—were visited in order not omitting the numerous other shrines dotted round the Temple. Next the

<sup>1</sup> See 12, p. 1511, of *Our Lives of Śāṅkara*.

<sup>2</sup> These terms are appropriate, as our terms have no equivalents.

<sup>3</sup> This is the ultimate river-boundary between the material and the spiritual spheres, where all sins get washed, hence *iravati*.

<sup>4</sup> This is the phrase used in verse 28 of St. Tondarādi-paṇḍi's *Tirumōḷi*. It means the "Saints who are dead to the world, but alive to God."

courtyard called the *Āṣi-y-śraṅgaḥ Tirumattam* was entered, where Rāmānuja prostrated again, and wheeling round the inner corridor, loving eyes fixed on the *Prasāda-like vimāṇa*, (the gold-covered cupola over the *aacatum sanctorum*), the shrine of *Vishvākṣena* was reached, where making obeisance, he was now in the precincts of the central Father's shrine. In this place, which goes by the name of *Āṣṭāgaya-mamaṣiṅga-tirumantapam*, the Lord Ranga (the moveable Image called *Naṁburaṇḍi*) came forth in advance to meet Rāmānuja, even as the Lord in Heaven leaves His Throne of Glory to go and embrace and welcome the souls who are saved and are arriving at the golden gates of Heaven. Rāmānuja was thrilled with joy. Bliss possessed him. He fell down, rose, fell again and held his hands up, fell again, and rose, thus did he reverently pace up to the Holy of Holies, where supporting himself against the *maṇa-t-tāṇ* pillar, he saw the blessed figure of Ranga reclining on His *Asanta-couch*,<sup>1</sup> and rivetting His eyes on the Holy Figure, enjoyed the Blessed vision in the manner enjoyed by St. Tiruppāñāṣvār in his *Amalan āḍippavāṇ*,<sup>2</sup> and recited in accents of bliss the *Tiruppall-āṇḍa* of St. Peri-y-āṣvār,<sup>3</sup> and the following bewitching verses of Yāmanāchārya :—

*Bow to Thee, Bow to Thee, beyond reach of word and thought,  
Bow to Thee, Bow to Thee, reachable by word and thought;  
Bow to Thee, Bow to Thee, Infinite in Riches,  
Bow to Thee, Bow to Thee, Infinite in Mercy.<sup>4</sup>  
Know I not virtue, eyes, blind to my soul,  
Nor do I love Thy Holy Blessed Feet,  
Wayless and Goad-less, I, O Refuge!  
Meekly seek and fall at Thy Holy Feet.<sup>5</sup>*

The Lord Ranga was enchanted with these outpourings of Rāmānuja's heart, and was pleased to place on his head His

<sup>1</sup> This means "God, the cosmic Dramatist on the stage of Eternal Time." For symbolical explanation, refer to p. 12, and 13, of *our Lives of Āṣṭvāra*.

<sup>2</sup> Read this Saint's Life in *our Lives of Āṣṭvāra*.

<sup>3</sup> Read his life in *our Lives of Āṣṭvāra*.

<sup>4</sup> *Śāstravāsa*, verse 31.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, verse 22.

Blessed Feet,<sup>1</sup> which Rāmānuja received in humility as the greatest honor and blessing conferred on a mortal, and stood transfixed with the thought that from that day onwards he had become one whose life was to be solely dedicated to the service of God. As he was thus ruminating, Lord Ranga (Periya Perumāl, or Lord stationary resting on serpent Susha) spoke thus: "All the riches of our Kingdom here and of Our Upper Regions, are given to thee, and to thy followers. The title [Aiyar] is conferred on thee. Take charge of Our household here, of which We appoint thee guardian and trustee, and manage all its affairs wisely." Rāmānuja received the mandate humbly and turning to Mahā-pūrṇa said — "What blessings belong not to those who have trusted Āchāryas like you, Sir? To my spiritual connection with you, is due the extraordinary favour Lord Ranga has bestowed upon me this day." Pūrṇa said: "O noble pupil of mine, the prophecy of St. Nammālvār, to which we were keenly looking forward, has this day come to pass. The prophecy is that contained in his verse: "O Men, learn that Kali will soon come to an end"<sup>2</sup>; and this is with reference to yourself. Pray then enter on your holy duties without further thought." Rāmānuja obeyed, and assumed charge of his exalted position. Taking his seat in the Hall called the Periya Tirumandapam, he instituted searching enquiries as to whether the weights and measures used in the Śrī-śārngāra (stores) were correct, whether the flower-service, sandal-paste-service, food-service, light-service, and all such services were all duly done, whether the Temple-servants were carefully selected and cared for, whether the public works<sup>3</sup> of the Shrine's noble structures were duly attended to, whether the flower gardens<sup>4</sup> attached to the Temple were properly tended and conserved; and whether the land<sup>5</sup> and other properties

<sup>1</sup> Called the Paṭha-Gaṇa.

<sup>2</sup> Literally "He who has got," meaning "He who has been given the Kingdom of God, as his property."

<sup>3</sup> Tiru-ady-Meaki, V. 2.

<sup>4</sup> Tirumalai.

<sup>5</sup> Śāṅga-p-paṭi.

<sup>6</sup> Amada-paṭi.

<sup>7</sup> Tiru-vīlakku.

<sup>8</sup> Tiru-madi-tiruppaṇi.

<sup>9</sup> Tiru-vananda-raṇam.

<sup>10</sup> Tiru-vīlayūṭṭu-coṭṭimai.

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pertaining to the Temple were well looked after. And thus from day to day was Rāmanuja engaged in restoring order and system in the vast concerns of the Temple. He picked out *Akalanka Nāṭ-āḷvān*,<sup>1</sup> and making him his disciple, set him over the Temple as his assistant, and saw to the strict and punctual discharge of all the ceremonial duties connected with the daily, fortnightly, monthly and yearly festivals of the shrine.

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<sup>1</sup> His wife is *Tripurāḍerī*, vide p. 2003. Vol. IV. *Bhagavad-vaṭṭayam* (1st Telugu Edition.)

## CHAPTER XIII

## KŪREṢA JOINING RĀMĀNUJA.

Kūreṣa having despatched Rāmānuja, returned to Kāंची. From here he went to his village Kūra, about three miles to the west of Kāंची. Being the lord of this village and very rich, he was called Kūranātha or Kūreṣa. He was as bounteous as rich. From morn till late in the night, the blind, lame, poor and disabled were freely served with food and clothing. One night, when the day's duties were over, the brass-made doors of his mansion were closed violently. This made such a ringing noise that it was heard at Kāंची. Lord Varada's Consort Lakshmi questioned Him as to the cause of the noise. The Lord explained to Her the greatness of Kūreṣa. "Then I wish to see him," said She. Kāंची-pūrṇa was commanded to go and fetch him. Pūrṇadaly came and was welcomed with every worship due to such a distinguished guest. Pūrṇa then disclosed the object of his mission, resulting from the deliberations which Varada and Lakshmi held on hearing the creaking of his brass doors. Kūreṣa was dismayed on hearing this. "What!" he cried, "a sinner like me, a wretch, a worm, to appear so big in the Lord's Eye. Crawling insect that I am! My doors to create disturbance in God's House! Pride hampers salvation, humility paves the way for it." So reflecting, Kūreṣa formed a resolution to forgo all and join Rāmānuja at Śrī-rāggam. He put his resolution into execution at once by abandoning all his riches, houses and lands,<sup>1</sup> which he gave away in charity to all that came, and bidding his wife Āṇḍālamma give up every article dear to her without regret and accompany him, left Kūra.

Pūrṇa returned to Kāंची, and recounted the extraordinary deeds of sacrifice following on repentance, and the departure, of Kūreṣa. Lord Varada was astonished at such

<sup>1</sup> Cp. "Sell all thou hast and give to the poor and follow me, and I will give you peace" [Matt. 19-31.]

<sup>2</sup> Give up all and follow Christ, A."

swift operation of His Grace on Kāreṣa's heart, and told his Consort "Well, you have had your wish fulfilled now."

Kāreṣa was now well on his way. Without fear he trudged on. They were, wife and husband, threading their way through a thick forest, and night also fell over them. The wife, unaccustomed to travel in this manner, dreaded thieves in such forsaken tracts, and turning to her husband asked him trembling, whether there was no fear in such places. He quickly answered — "Dear, if thou hast stuff anywhere hidden in your person, there is fear. Fish feed on water-worms. Fowls feed on land-worms. Death feeds on life. And so thieves feed on riches. I suspect, dear, thou hast something with thee, though I commanded thee to relinquish all behind." "Pardon me, lord," said Āṇḍālamma, "I have left all behind, but thinking you might need a cup to drink from, on your long journey, I secreted but a golden cup." So saying, she unfolded the vessel from her cloth, and shaking with fear, handed it to her husband. He took it and threw it away into the jungle, and said to his wife "Now, lady, walk on. Thy fear has been cast out." Thus did this matchless pair travel on and in time reach Srirangam. Rāmānuja was jubilant at his arrival, and sent out his people to receive him with every mark of respect, and conduct him to his Maṭh. Rāmānuja, on his approach, rose and, warmly enfolding him in his arms, welcomed him to Srirangam, to himself, and to all the great work that jointly they were destined to accomplish in the near future. Kāreṣa thus forsook his rich home and all at Kūr, and made Srirangam henceforth his permanent residence, subsisting here by alms. Thus did a great and most important personage for the life-work of Rāmānuja, join him. We shall leave him for a time and see how fared Govinda at Kālabasti.

## CHAPTER XIV. GOVINDA'S CONVERSION.

A Sri-vaishnava had been despatched, it will be remembered to Sri-saia Pārṇa (= Tīrṇamalai Nambī), to deliberate on the mode of reclaiming Govinda, who had *accidentally* become a Śaiva, and had been made the director of the Kālahasti-Temple. The messengers returned with a joyful countenance to Rāmānuja. Before they broke the tidings, Rāmānuja saw by his face there was success, and bade him recount what had taken place. He began thus: "Holy Sire, with your holy leave, I reached Tīrupati in due time, and making obeisance to Pārṇa, conveyed to him the intelligence you had entrusted me with. Pārṇa was rejoiced to find that what he himself had contemplated doing with regard to Govinda, was Rāmānuja's wish as well, and that his own intention was thereby sweetened. So saying, he immediately started with a knot of followers, including myself. We reached Kālahasti, and Pārṇa seated himself under a tree near the Temple-pond. Uḷḷangai-Konaraṇḍa Nāyaṇār (= Govinda) came there with vessels to the pond in order to carry water for the ablution-ceremony of Śiva, all the time chanting songs of His praise. Pārṇa said: "*What fruit will you get, by odd bathing the Konara-decked Thing?*" Govinda heard this, looked up in Pārṇa's face, smiled and went his way. "This will do for once. Let God work upon his heart," Pārṇa exclaimed to himself, and returning to Tīrupati, attended to his usual studies and teachings.

Sri-saia Pārṇa now made another venture. He went to the same tree and pond as before in Kālahasti. Nāyaṇār (= Govinda) was coming as usual with vessels to fetch water. Pārṇa thought he would try a plan even like the plans of God, who works without being seen, and is unknown by men as the Planner. To the world, God seems as if sleeping, but He is all wakeful. So reasoning within himself, Pārṇa wrote his Guru Yāmuna's verse

<sup>1</sup> This was the name he bore as a Śaiva. It means "he who found the liṅga in his palm." See Chapter VI.

<sup>2</sup> Meaning Śiva who is fond of *konra* flowers.

*Śvābhāvikaśatadhikā, &c.* [See p. 55.]

on a piece of palm-leaf, and allowed it to lie in the path of Nāyanār, who of course was unaware of the design. He came. The piece arrested his sight. He took it for curiosity, read it but threw it away and went on his errand. But as he was returning with his pots full, he felt an impulse to pick up the piece again, and read the contents once more deliberately. He did so and looked round. There we were seated under the tree. He came near and said "The wail has turned into verse,"<sup>1</sup> said Vālmīki, and like him reflecting over his spontaneous utterance, I have been reflecting over the meaning of this chance-found strip. Did you, sire, throw it? Is this your property?" addressing Pārṇa. On this the following conversation ensued:—

*Nāyanār.* Have you lost your property?<sup>2</sup>

*Pārṇa.* We cannot lose our property. Others only lose theirs (meaning, we cannot lose our God. You have lost our God).

*N.* Never mind that. How is it you are all assembled in one body (i.e., you are all belonging to one cult, and seem to pursue a peculiar path)

*P.* Well, we have been brought together, as various ways meet here (i.e., the Path to God we are pursuing is the One Path into which all other paths issue).

*N.* But is there a Path for those who stand aloof like you? (i.e., aloof-ness or isolation or *Kaivalya* is the state of souls which on the one hand have eschewed material fetters, but on the other hand have not recognized God. This isolation is what in modern days called the *Eonic suspension* of souls, equivalent to eternal damnation.)

<sup>1</sup> शोकश्लोकत्वमागतं [Rāmāyaṇa II. 40]. i.e., Vālmīki uttered a cry of distress when he saw a Fowler killing an innocent curlew but Vālmīki to his surprise found he had uttered a verse.

<sup>2</sup> The whole conversation has Tamil words having double meanings. We have tried to make it as clear as possible by parenthetical explanations.



P We are not aloof in your sense. The aloof are those who have discarded their real property (God), but we hold our property (God) firm in our hands. We are thus God sided (i.e., God-partisans) if you please.

N Never mind this. Have you now come here to leave your relatives? (i.e., to leave more converts like me for Siva)

P No. We have come here to buy kine? (i.e., to reclaim or convert those who belong to the bull (kine)-riding God (Siva))

N Is not the dust of kine said in the Śāstras to be sacred or sin-purifying? (hinting that Siva's bull is thus a sacred animal, whose hoof-dust is purifying to all men)

P No dust is sacred except it be beaten up by kine of the Sacred Land (of Viṣṇu)<sup>1</sup>, but not that beaten up from the unholy burning (or cremation) ground, where Siva dwells.

N Never mind that. What difference is there between horizontal and vertical? (i.e., is it not immaterial whether we paint our foreheads horizontally or vertically)

P Yes, there is as much difference between as between beast (horizontal) and man (vertical)<sup>2</sup>

N I suppose, this is the language and cult of a New Style (i.e., a New Dispensation?)

P Nothing new is ours. It is as old as time, and sanctioned by authority (Veda, &c.) (i.e., our Vaiṣṇavism is not born-to-day. It is as old as the Vedas)

N But if we inquire into Sacred Authorities, it is found to embody all sorts of cults.

<sup>1</sup> Like Brindāraṇa &c., the Holy Land of the Holy neat-headed Krishna.

<sup>2</sup> Beast walks horizontally, man walks erect. It is a significant fact that in all paintings and sculptures, where the *Dev-dāva* war, or war between Gods and Demons, is represented, marks horizontal (*hṛyak-paṇḍra*) are shown on the foreheads of Demons, and upright marks (*Ārdra-paṇḍra*) on the foreheads of Gods.

P. Exactly. And that is the reason why you should fully inquire, dive into the very depths of knowledge as to what is the Highest Truth in the Universe, and diving, bring up the Pearl of truth from all the mud and ooze, (i.e., find out Nārāyaṇa from all the tangled skein of the Vedas.)

N. Nāyanār thus was dumb-founded. He simply nodded his head, scanning Pūrṇa all the while from top to toe, and went his way with clear signs of serious thought in his heart visible in his countenance.<sup>1</sup>

Pūrṇa now thought thus: "Yes, his heart has now quickened,<sup>2</sup> the rest is God's own work. I consign the troubled soul there to Him." So saying he returned to the Holy Hill (Tirumalai Tirupati)."

Thus did the Śrīvaiṣṇava narrate to Rāmānuja the result of his mission to reclaim Govinda to Vaiṣṇavism. Rāmānuja on hearing this, went into a paroxysm of joy, and turning to Dēśarāthi and other disciples, said:—"Look, how our great Guru Yāmunā's Holy voice has found its entry into Govinda's heart; and how Govinda played a burlesque and spoke to our Śrī-śaila-Pūrṇa thereon in sarcastic quibbles. And see how our Pūrṇa retorted to Govinda in the same clever sarcastic style. Being well versed in Śāstric lore, see how Govinda acknowledged Pūrṇa's significant sarcasms, and allowed himself to be beaten into silence. What a polemical victory? And hear me now expound to you the meaning of their cypher-repartes. I simply cite a number of authorities bearing on the question.<sup>3</sup>

(1) "There are two things *Kṣhara* and *Akṣhara*. *Kṣhara* is all this being, *Akṣhara* is liberated souls. And different from these is *Parashottama*, Myself, the Person *par excellence* &c." [*Bhagavad-Gītā*, XV. 16 to 19]

<sup>1</sup> Readers are invited to the *parami* of *Bhagavad-guṇyaṇam*. Vol. IV or *Tiruvky-mozhi*. (*Harum-Idam*).

<sup>2</sup> प्रसन्नमनसिभिरम् [*Sānta-Samhitā*]

<sup>3</sup> The reader must be satisfied with reading the citations merely. This is no place for expansion thereof.

(2) "He (Vishṇu) is the first of the Immortals, and Prior to them" [*Prabandha*].

(3) "The Soul of those who walk virtue's path" [*Nāradya*]

(4) "He is the Door to Salvation" [*Prabandha*].

(5) "Hardly one knows Me truly" [*Gītā VII-3*].

(6) "I am Thine, and Thou art mine" [*T. V. Mazhi, II-9-8*]

(7) "He must be classed with beasts who has no knowledge (of God)" [*Hitopadesa*]<sup>1</sup>

(8) "How else will they spend their time, (if not by thinking of Vishṇu)?" [*Periya-taru-r-and-idu, v-86*].

(9) "Those who wear vertical marks on their foreheads, &c., are Vaishṇavas" \* [*Śrī Bhagavata*]

(10) "Sprinkle the Holy Dust of the feet of godly men" [*T-ray-Mazhi, IV 6-5*].

(11) "All twice-born shall wear vertical marks" \* [*Yajña-valkya*].

(12) "Vedas are the source of authority" [*Manu II-6*]

(13) "Sat, O Saumya, was in the beginning" \* [*Āitareya Up: VI 2*]

(14) "Ātma, Saumya, was in the beginning" \* [*Āitareya Up: I-1*].

<sup>1</sup> आह्वानिद्राभयमैधुनानि तुल्यानिलत्वज्ञसमस्तजन्तो ।

ज्ञानादिशिरोहिनरूपेभ्यो ज्ञानेनहीनवपुमिस्समनः ॥

\* येनैकवृत्तप्रतुलसी नक्षिणाचमस्ता येनाल्लसत्कलको लसद्दर्शपुंदा ।

येनाहुर्भूलपरिचिह्नितः सङ्ख्यकाः तेर्वैश्वानरमुदमाहुः पवित्रयानि ॥

\* अर्धपुंद् द्विजातीनाम्,

\* वेदोत्तिसोऽर्धमूलम्,

\* सदेवसोऽग्नेरधमश्चासीत्,

\* आत्मावाइदेयेकएवामासीत्,

(15) *Brahman*, O Saṁnya, was in the beginning<sup>1</sup> [*Vāṇsaneya* III-4].<sup>2</sup>

And if it be asked who is the *Sat*, the *Ātma*, the *Brahman*.

(16) "Indeed, it is the one *Nārāyaṇa*" [*Mahopani-  
shat*. I]

(17) (*Nārāyaṇa* or) *Vishnu* is the highest God, and *Agni* is the lowest. All other gods go between<sup>3</sup> [*Ātārēya  
Brāhmaṇa*, I-1-1]

(18) "The *Pragava* is the bow, *Ātma* is the arrow, and *Brahman* is the Target. The wise man shall hit the Target and become filled with It"<sup>4</sup> [*Mund Up* II-4]

(14) "From *Nārāyaṇa* is *Brahmā* born, from *Nārāyaṇa* is *Rudra* (*Siva*) born"<sup>5</sup> [*Nārāyaṇa Up*].

And *Smṛitis*, *Purāṇas*, and *Itihāsas* support these authorities, for see *Bhagavad-Gītā*, X-2, XI-37, IX-10; *Manu-Smṛiti* I-8, XII 132, *Viṣṇu-Purāṇa* I, 1-32, I, 2-20, IV, 1-39, I, 22-64 and 78, VI, 4-10, *Mahā-Bhārata*, *Śānti-Moksha*, 168-78 and 79-169-19, 30 and 31, *Udyoga*, 67, and *Hariṣaṁsa*, 32, 223-39, 279-47, &c., &c.

<sup>1</sup> ब्रह्मवाङ्मयमसीत्.

<sup>2</sup> एकोऽहर्नारायणमसीत्.

<sup>3</sup> भद्रैर्वेदानामयमो विष्णुपरमः तदन्तरेवासर्षामन्यादेवताः ॥

<sup>4</sup> मकवोषतुरराध्यान्वा ब्रह्मब्रह्मसुच्यते ।

अप्रमत्तेन वदन्त्यं हरिस्तन्मयो भवेत् ॥

<sup>5</sup> नारायणात् ब्रह्मा जायते । नारायणात् रुद्रो जायते ॥

**Note** :—From (3) to (6), it may be observed how the conception of God evolved from the term *Sat* up to *Nārāyaṇa*. If our readers are etymologists, they will at once understand the splendid discovery of Rāmānuja in the intricate windings of the Vedas. Says Max Müller :—  
"Every new work was a discovery, and these early discoveries, if but properly understood, are more im-

portant to us than the greatest conquests of the Kings of Egypt or Babylon. Not one of our greatest explorers has unearthed with his spade or pickaxe more splendid palaces and temples, whether in Egypt or in Babylon, than the etymologist. Every word is the palace of a human thought." [P. 17, Vol. I, *Trans. of the Ninth International Congress of Orientalists*].

When therefore Śrī-saila Pūrṇa answered Nāyanār in his own riddles, he was convinced inasmuch as he was well-versed in Sāstras. And Pūrṇa feeling sure that Nāyanār was well on the way towards conversion, returned to Tirumalai. How clever of Pūrṇa !” So saying, Rāmānoja congratulated the Śrī-Vaiṣṇava who had returned. “ And what next ?” asked he.

“ Sire,” continued the Vaiṣṇava, “ listen to the results of the third rally of Pūrṇa. He made obeisance to Lord Śrīnivāsa of Tirupati, and entered the purities of Kālahasti and camping there in a tope, spent his time in teaching his disciples the commentaries on *Tiruvāy-mozhi*, (i.e. *Bhagavad-Vishayam*). Nāyanār came that way and got up a trumpet-flower tree (*pidiri* to cull flowers for Śiva's worship). Pūrṇa had taken up *Tiruvāy-mozhi* or Cent. II, Dec. 2 of Śrī Nāmadhvar's *Tiruvāy-mozhi*, for comment, and as he went on reciting and explaining, Nāyanār attentively pursued the discourse. Pūrṇa came to the fourth verse thereof, which ended with— ‘ Except the One God (Krishna), which other deserves flower or worship ?’ On hearing this, Nāyanār jumped down the tree at once, flung away his flower-reticula, tore away the *rudrākṣa*<sup>1</sup> beads he was wearing, and fell at the feet of Pūrṇa, overcome with emotion, and exclaimed— ‘ No, no, no one else can deserve Holy Sire ! I am an ignorant, and apostate and am unclean and wallowing in the mire of worldliness.’ Save me, save me. Alas that when God of the two Universes, (Nārāyaṇa) has been, I professed fealty to the ‘ Nṇde deity of the Dishevelled Hair (Śiva)’, when we have had the ‘ Love-beaming Lotus-Eyed (Viṣṇu),’ I placed my affections on ‘ Fire-vomitting Ugly-Eyed (Śiva)’, when we have had Krishna, the sea-and-land Swallower, I worshipped the ‘ Poison-dark-necked’ (Śiva), when we have had the *Kaipāka*-tree which had saved the herds and herdsmen from Indra's hail and storm (Krishna), I honored the ‘ Dead-skull-handed (Śiva), when we have had the Śrī-breasted (Viṣṇu), I bowed

<sup>1</sup> The berries of *Uncaria Gambir*, sacred to Śiva.

<sup>2</sup> अथवाचारमित्र इति नो दुःखसागरे । निबद्धकूपकोपूते पुटेभागीत्येव च ।

to the 'Beggar (Siva)'; when we have had the glorious 'Silk-mantled (Vishnu)', I was an abject slave to the 'Tiger-skin-mantled (Siva)', when we have had the 'Gangā-toed (Vishnu)', I circumambulated the 'Grave-yard-stalker (Siva)', when we have had the God of the fragrant *Tulasi*<sup>1</sup>, I resorted to the 'Siled<sup>2</sup>-fond (Siva)' and wasted my strength by pouring pailful of water over the vile phallos." So went on Nāyanār, now really Govinda, going through the whole gamut of the Vishnu Siva legends and very contrite at heart for his vagrancy, supplicated Pūrṇa to save his soul, lost in the wilds of false faiths. Govinda thus lay prostrate. Pūrṇa looked at his disciples and saying "Repentance has washed this soul clean, and Ālavandār will now accept the purged heart," lifted him up with loving hands, patted him on the back and discoursed to him in soothing tones, "drinking Govinda, as it were, with his gracious eyes, and hugging him as it were to his heart."<sup>3</sup>

The Sivite residents of Kālabarā came to know of Nāyanār's remorse, recantation and redemption and humming round Pūrṇa, remonstrated with him thus:—"How canst thou entice, Sir, our Nāyanār, by mesmerizing him with charm-dust?" "Why do ye ask me?" retorted Pūrṇa, "there is your Nāyanār; ask him. Know, our ways are hidden to you, and we never swerve to others' ways." Then they turned to Nāyanār, and seizing his hand, "Come," said they. Govinda swiftly snatched his hand away from their clench and said in anger "How dare ye pollute my hand with your touch? Here, take away the temple-keys, the signet-ring and other articles of your cult and creed. My connection with you

<sup>1</sup> The trail sacred to Vishnu (read p. lvi. of our *Life of Āchārya*.)

<sup>2</sup> *Egle Marmelos*, leaves of—sacred to Siva.

<sup>3</sup> आतिथिविषयसु-सामाख्यविषयेतसः ।

आदात्ततिथिपरयमाधेतपद्योषितम् ॥ [*Brāhṇa Par*]

<sup>4</sup> *Amada-poti* in Tamil, a magic-dust supposed to possess the property of subjugating another's will to one's own.

has from this moment ceased, and I have nothing more to do with you. I am entirely rid now of old shackles." So saying, he suited action to word, by clapping his hands,<sup>1</sup> and turned his face away from them. Thus beaten they said to Pârna, — "Sure, we had known all this yesterday, and yet we thought we would go to you and make a stand and try to force or persuade Nāyanār back to us, but it is hopeless, we find. Hear, however, the dream which we had. Our God of Kālahasti (Siva) appeared to us and spake thus: "Listen, my faithful! In the old days, the Vedas and Sāstras suffered at the hands of the Pāṇḍins, Bauddhās and Chārvākas. They were restored by the three staffed Sanyāsins, Dattātreyā. Again now, as of old, the Vedas have suffered by heretical vandalism. To re-establish them, the celestials Viśvakarma, Ananta and Vāmanāteya have become incarnate on earth, under the names of Yāmuna, Rāmānāja and Govinda. To help them, the Divine Symbols of Vishnu—the Couch and the Discus—have appeared as Dāśarathī and Kārtika, respectively. So, the Vedic Vaishnavism which is going to revive under these Masters is a system which is after my own heart. Govinda had entertained a wish once for living in Kāśī, and this desire I fulfilled by appearing as the loka in his palm, and giving him thus a chapter of Saivism, so that he may be in a position to show and prove to others the comparative merits of the two systems, which can best be done only after personal experience. Vaishnavās are a free people. Interfere not. Let them alone." 'Such was our dream,' the Saivas represented, 'and so, Sirs, you are free, and we return.' Pârna's plans were thus worked out. He took Govinda to his home at Tirupati, and has had, as expiatory, the tonsure, &c., performed as also the five-fold Sacraments<sup>2</sup> of the Vaishnavas—on the shores of the Holy Pond, called the Svāmi-Pushkarinī—administered. After this the Holy Teachings contained in the Prabandhas of the Saints (Āshvās) were duly imparted, and the Five Fundamental

<sup>1</sup> This means: washing one's hands off.

<sup>2</sup> शेषनामसङ्गकर्तव्याः षडङ्गीरिचमनाम् ।

शेष-पुनर्दूतकामाव सन्धीमानधनञ्जय ॥ [Kāṭyāyana-Samhitā.]

*Truths*<sup>1</sup> of religion were explained to him, thus making Govinda an all-round Vaisṇava for evangelistic work with Rāmānuja. Govinda looked upon Pūrṇa, his Master, as God Himself. He knew of no other God except his Saviour, Pūrṇa, to whom he was a servitor, in thought, speech and deed, even as Lakshmana was to Rāmachandra.<sup>2</sup>

And I, Master, remained with them so long, enjoying their company as well as studies." Thus related the Vaisṇava to Rāmānuja.

On hearing this, Rāmānuja rapturously eyed the Srīvaiṣṇava and uttered blessings. The first successful evangelistic work of Rāmānuja had thus been accomplished, by the recovery of Govinda from his apostasy.

<sup>1</sup> The *Artha-parichaya*, or the nature of (1) God, (2) Soul, (3) Goal (4) Means, (5) Sin. A separate treatise on this topic comprises one of the sixteen Mystery-Books of Sage Pūjari Lakṣhārya.

<sup>2</sup> अहं सर्वं करिष्यामि जगत्सर्वस्वतन्मे ॥ [Bāṇa II. 31. 37]

'Thou shalt with thy Vaidika spouse,

Recline upon the mountain's brows;

Be mine the toil, be mine the keep

Watch o'er thee, waking or asleep.' [Griffiths]



## CHAPTER XV

## RĀMĀNUJA AND MANTRA.

Sri Rāmānuja had not yet formally seen his Guru Sri Mahāpūrṇa, at his residence, after his arrival at Srirangam from Kāñchī. And, too, through his wife, he had possibly offended him. But he had abandoned her on that account and donned the Sannyāsin robes. Was this sufficient amends to appease the Guru? Such thoughts embarrassed Rāmānuja. He would however go and tender ample apologies. So he walked on to his Guru's dwelling. In an attitude of veneration and humility, he prostrated himself, and telling him how he had made expiation for his past conduct, begged of him to pardon that for which he was not personally responsible. Pūrṇa said he never knew there was anything to pardon, but that on the other hand Rāmānuja was daily growing in his estimation. "Sire," said Rāmānuja, rising, "to fill the blank caused by Yāmunā's sudden departure, to supply yourself the lack caused by my having, by a hair's breadth, missed conversing with him on matters spiritual, deign to impart to me all the mysteries of religion, that great Guru of mine has entrusted to you for the purpose." "With the greatest delight," replied Pūrṇa, "I have been nigherly looking out for an occasion like this. There shall be no more delay. The essence of our Holy Faith, know, is embedded in the Drāya-mantra 'O, its greatness' its power and strength' A gem, eternal, holy,—the very gist of the Vedas' Purifying, meritorious' Rich, world-winning, and healing.' So saying, he briefly imparted to Rāmānuja the essentials of religion contained in it, viz., *There is but One God. He is All-merciful, and is therefore our Way. He is All-knowing and All-mighty, and is therefore Our God. The soul's end and aim is therefore eternal living service at His Holy Feet. There are glorious amplifications of this truth yet. Learn these at the*

‘अदोऽक्षयम् इत्यम् अदोऽक्षयमदोऽक्षयम् ।

यत्कर्मत्वं कर्मत्वं कर्मत्वं कर्मत्वं कर्मत्वं ।

सर्वपापघ्नकर्मत्वं कर्मत्वं कर्मत्वं कर्मत्वं ।

श्रीकर्मोक्तकर्मत्वं कर्मत्वं कर्मत्वं कर्मत्वं । [Kāṇḍa-guṇa-Sādhakā.]

feet of Tira-k-kōṭṭiyār Nambi (= Gosh'bi-Pārṇa), who was an intimate disciple of Yāmunā.

Rāmānuja took leave and proceeded to Tira-k-kōṭṭiyūr (near Pedukōta), and, on arriving there asked the passers-by where Gōshthi-Pārṇa was living. "There, in that poor low hut," said they, pointing. Rāmānuja fell on his knees, and all the way from where he stood up to the hut, he went prostrate. Only those knew Nambi well, who knew how not to see defects in their Masters, but only saw perfections, and these to exaggeration." Rāmānuja approached Nambi and falling at his feet prayed "Teach me, Holy Sir, all the recondite doctrines of our Faith. I am the humblest of Master-pārṇa." In order to test the strength of Rāmānuja's professions, Goshthi-Pārṇa said in an off-hand manner "What have I to tell, and to whom?" and gave him no countenance. Rāmānuja never spoke another word, either of application or of reproach, but simply prostrated himself and returned to Kōṭi (= Srirangam).

G Pārṇa had to visit Srirangam for the seasons' festivities connected with that Holy Place. He came and paid homage to the Lord Ranga, who was pleased to do him with all honors, and commanded, through the officiating priest,—"Instruct our Rāmānuja in all the occult law of the Faith." "But, O Glorious God!" said G Pārṇa, "It is Thou who hast ruled 'Tell not those who have not been apprenticed at least for a year.' 'Reveal not high truths to the non-attentive, non-dutiful, who love me not, &c.'?" So that if I have to carry out the strict letter of Thy law, I must wait and try Thy Rāmānuja."

<sup>1</sup> See Hierarchic Table, No. 24 in our *Lives of Āchāryas*.

<sup>2</sup> This attitude of mind towards a Teacher constitutes a real disciple; and only then is his successful spiritual career named. "The glad and cordial recognition of excellence," says A. Bama, "whenever found, the checking of the critical and carping spirit that fixes on defects and ignores virtues,

these things prepare the soul to recognise his Guru when he appears. Many a one misses his teacher by the mental habit of fixing the attention on blemishes rather than on beauties, by seeing only the sun spots and not the Sun." [*Notes of Devotion* p. 263 f. *These Review* Vol. XXVI]

<sup>3</sup> This is the Indian whom for a "true disciple." Let our readers become accustomed to it.

<sup>4</sup> कर्मवत्सल्यविशेषकम्,

<sup>5</sup> इदमेवोक्तम् [ib. ib. XVIII-64.]

"Not so in his case," answered Ranga, "as he is fully qualified according to the requirements of the text—

*Body, wealth, mind, life itself, belong to the Guru, &c.,*<sup>1</sup> and therefore he may be instructed.

"Come to my place," said G. Pūrṇa to Rāmānuja and left Srīrangam. Rāmānuja went all the way, as directed, to T. Kōṭṭiyār again. But when he went there "Not this time, can you go now and come again?" told Pūrṇa. Rāmānuja never thought of a protest, and never felt irritated, but simply obeyed the command, and returned to Srīrangam. Eighteen times,<sup>2</sup> thus, it is chronicled, did Rāmānuja journey to T. Kōṭṭiyār and return, each time being told the same thing. G. Pūrṇa had at the same time no other idea except that of testing Rāmānuja's faith and zeal, and testing him through an ordeal of novitiate probation, to see if his spirit was strong and capable of overcoming passions of the mind. Had his will been weak, he would long ago have given up his endeavor as unworthy of of pursuit. Had he succumbed under the weight of disappointment and chagrin, that would have proved him an unworthy disciple, to whom it would have been needless to reveal occult truths. Such were Pūrṇa's thoughts. And on the other hand, Rāmānuja's tenacity of purpose was raising him every time in Pūrṇa's estimation. When he returned to Srīrangam for the eighteenth time, however, he felt somewhat, and was moved to tears at the futility of his repeated efforts, and was found deeply revolting in his mind, as to what he should do next, when a disciple of G. Pūrṇa chanced to come from T. Kōṭṭiyār, and came on a visit to Rāmānuja. Rāmānuja, bidding him be seated, and after preliminaries were over, poured before him his bitter grievances, and consulted him as to how he should make himself worthy. And he finished the consultation by saying "Is not God pledged to save us from evil, and grant us bliss? Even so are God's regents on earth. How am I to become worthy if by the worthy, my unworthiness is not effaced, and unless the benefactor gives, how is the receiver

<sup>1</sup> श्रीरंगमुनिज्ञानं वासःकर्मगुणानमृतम् ।

गुरुर्बन्धनदेवस्तु लक्ष्मिर्धोर्नतरस्तु ॥ [Śrīrāṅga-Samhitā.]

<sup>2</sup> See Kōṭṭiyār's Intro. to Charama-Sloka.

to be blamed?" The disciple returned to T Kōtṭiyār, and told his master how Rāmānuja was pining for knowledge. "Has he such keen appetite? Then I must at once feed him. A moment's delay more on my part brings on. Let Rāmānuja come to me alone with his staff and pennant.<sup>1</sup> So did G Pūrṇa exclaim, and bade the same disciple go forth at once and bring Rāmānuja to him. Swiftly came he, and prostrating himself before Rāmānuja begged of him to proceed. He started immediately, taking his two intimate disciples with him, Kūrēsa and Dāsarathi, and fell at Pūrṇa's feet. "Thou instead of thyself alone, as I had commanded!" exclaimed Pūrṇaireta. "Holy Sir!" explained Rāmānuja, "'come with staff and pennant' was thy order. So I have come." "Staff and pennant! which is thy staff, which is thy pennant?" asked Pūrṇa. "Sir, Dāsarathi is my staff, Kūrēsa is my pennant. I am never without them, nor they without me." Pūrṇa's irritation vanished and he was moved by Rāmānuja's exemplary conduct and astuteness. "Well," spoke Pūrṇa—who by the bye had been commanded by Lord Ranga in a dream again, to disclose Holy secrets to Rāmānuja, as the latter was no other than Ādiṣaṣha himself incarnated. "I make exceptions of these, thy Inseparables, I command thee that to no others shalt thou impart the sacred truths I am going to divulge to thee." So saying, he led Rāmānuja to a secret corner of his hut, and there revealed to him the hidden truths of the *Ten-mātra*, or the Mantra of the *Aṣṭākṣara*-I panishad, the eight-syllabled and three-worded Mantra, the gravity of which is thus described:—"*Prasa* the first, *Ṇama* the middle, and *Viṇḍana* the last. So runs the Eight-syllabled Mantra, to be ever used in prayer by seekers after God. It is the granter of every boon, and promoter of devotion and dispassion."

<sup>1</sup> Staff is the *Yodanda* of the Sanyāsa, and pennant is the colored piece of cloth attached to its top.

<sup>2</sup> दक्षकर्मयोगार्थं यायाकथयामिबन्धु ।

बन्धुवदन्तुर्विदन्तु ॥ इतिविदित्वाकथाम् ॥

बन्धुवदन्तुर्विदन्तु ॥ इतिविदित्वाकथाम् ॥

इतिविदित्वाकथाम् ॥ इतिविदित्वाकथाम् ॥ [Siddhanta Samh. 14.]

Also see our *Lessons of Devotion and Wisdom of Devotion* for detailed explanations.

"This," he said, "is the Mantra which all our Saints and Sages constantly recited and pondered over. It is the best-ower of eternal bliss." Rāmānuja reverently received the teachings, and considered himself now as regenerated and saved. But he could not contain the truths within him, though imparted under pledge of secrecy. "Why are such truths so jealously guarded from all mortals? If God is not for sinners, from whom is He? And therefore is not His Holy Word a message for all? Why should mortals be denied its saving power? But I shall not make a secret of it. I shall divulge it to all regardless of consequences." So did Rāmānuja reflect and reason. Compassion for all men burned in his heart. So he made up his mind to proclaim the Word to the public.

The next day, he entered into the big and elevated hall<sup>1</sup> of *Terk kāṣṭhān*, or the Lord Nṛsiṃha, Resident of *Tira k-kōṭṭiyūr*, invited all to assemble there, and his full heart flowed to them in the revealing of the precious truths relating to Spirit, which he had learnt from G. Pārma, under vow of secrecy. This news reached and roused the indignation of G. Pārma. He commanded Rāmānuja to appear before him, and asked in tones of anger—"Culprit! did we not strictly enjoin thee not to reveal our noble truths of religion to the undeserving vulgar? How dar'st thou misbehave, and outrage promises made?" "Revered Sir," submitted Rāmānuja, "I confess I am guilty of disobedience. But I taught the truths to others to glorify thee and thy love." "That is not it," retorted Pārma, "the disobedience on thy part is the question. That, thou hast glaringly shown. What is thy punishment for it?" "My punishment is certainly hell, Sir," submitted Rāmānuja. "That thou well knewest," protested Pārma, "and yet what made thee to violate my law?" "Sir," said Rāmānuja, "pray listen to me calmly. Disobedience surely deserves hell. I must be sent there, no doubt. But, holy Sir, may I submit that it is but little sacrifice for one sinner to make, inasmuch

<sup>1</sup> This is called the *ṣepaṭam* or *punnarī*, as sung by *Aṅḡ-v-aṅḡpāṅḡr* in his *Rāmānuja-aṭindaṁba-ōṭam* :—

"*किमुपुतेपिनिरेविषधिराणम्*".

as it brings salvation to many.<sup>1</sup> Moreover all the merit of that whole-sale salvation goes to you, because of the Holy Secret having emanated from your great self.<sup>2</sup> These reasons emboldened me to infringe thy holy command. It was compassion for mankind that rendered me blind to thy injunctions.<sup>3</sup> I ask forgiveness. Do with me, holy Sure, what thou wilt." G Pūrṇa was struck dumb at this reasoning and his own heart moved. 'Oh, that this idea never entered my crippled heart,' said he excitedly, "my heart, which would not ere this warm with love for mankind. I am hated. Strange I never felt the all-embracing love of Rāmānuja. Rāmānuja! Yaśodhara! Indeed thou art He, come on earth. I see it all now." Thus vehemently venting forth the new and strange emotions stirring in his breast Pūrṇa rushed forward and embracing Rāmānuja continued. "Holy son, thou art mine, my own indeed art thou. Thy name shall henceforth be *Emberumaiśv*. The creed that I gave thee was hitherto known as the *Creed of the High Vedānta*, but henceforth it shall be known to the world as the *Creed of Emberumaiśv*. Not only that, which thou hast already heard from me, shalt thou proclaim from the house-tops, but more shalt thou hear from me. Secrets there are yet. Come, wilt thou be, or art thou, satisfied, as thou usest, with what thou hast got?" So went on Pūrṇa, in the exuberance of his strangely awakened love for Rāmānuja. "Holy Sure," softly said Rāmānuja, "I am not to lay down law for you. Had I in the least thought that there were yet other Secrets than those you have already so graciously divulged, and therefore stood in need, that would prove lack of trust in me; i.e., as if I harboured doubts as to your sincerity. But if I say now 'I need no more,' that would prove that I had not well understood the bearings of the first set of secrets given me. So I hold my peace. It is for you therefore, Master, to decide in these circumstances and from events which have transpired, what I deserve." My own son, Rāmānuja, dear?" said Pūrṇa, "then let it be deferred. Go

<sup>1</sup> Cp. this what Rāmānuja (i.e., Lakṣmana) said:—

"एवमप्यस्यैव साधुर्लक्ष्मणः" [Uttara Rām; 105-8].

<sup>2</sup> Read Pp. 266f. Bhagavadgītāyam, Vol. VII. Ed. (Telugu edition.)

now and come again, but mind, come alone." Rāmānuja stretched himself before his Guru, rose and left for Srīrangam with his 'staff and pennant'.

Some time after, Rāmānuja journeyed, as bidden, to his Master for farther instructions, and humbled himself before him. "Come now," said G. Pūrṇa, clasping Rāmānuja's hand lovingly. Taking him to a sequestered spot and adopting every precaution that no one may disturb them, "touch my feet", said he, and promise thou wilt not venture on further disclosures of our most cherished secrets." On Rāmānuja solemnly plighting his word, Pūrṇa began in the manner of Lord Krishna —

*"Listen, Arjuna, again, to My lofty speech, the Secret of Secrets. I say it as it is good for thee, and as thou art my friend and devotee"* [Bh. Gt. XI III 64.]

"It is the Last Word (*Charama-sloka*) of the spiritual science, contained in the Lord's verse," said Pūrṇa. Thus:—

*"Give up entirely all other Ways,  
Choose Me alone as Thy Way.  
Thee, from all sins, I will absolve,  
No more then shalt thou mourn."* [Bh. Gt. XVIII, 66.]

"Son, reveal not these Holy Truths to the unprepared, undeserving, unerving, and haters of God (Me)." [Bh. Gt. XVIII 67.] Rāmānuja, if you value these Truths, then let not atheists and heretics hear them. Guard them against such.

"Let it be, Sirs, as thou wilt," said Rāmānuja, "but may I not make exceptions of such worthy God-loving souls as Kūrṇa. How can I conceal from him?" "He may be worthy," enjoined Pūrṇa, "but our Śāstras lay conditions such as:

*"One year, half year, quarter year at least, shall the postulant be examined in every way, and then shall the Guru initiate him,*

<sup>1</sup> संवत्सरैर्नवर्षेण मासत्रयमद्यापि।

प्रीत्यङ्गिबोधोपायैः कृपयन्निस्सृष्टोत्तरेण ।"

*graciously, disinterestedly.*<sup>1</sup> And therefore, after putting him to test and seeing that he really craves for knowledge during this trial-period teach him." Rāmānuja received these commands and returned to Srirangam as a victor returning home after a successful campaign. He thought to himself that even like the Eighteen Chapters of the Gītā preached by Sri Krishna, before the Last Word (*Charama-shloka*) was revealed, in order to test Arjuna's mind, were the eighteen trips imposed upon him by his Gura. "I am Crown Prince now," he exclaimed rapturously, "and I am heir to the Kingdom of God."

Kūrēṣa was now longing to learn this Truth. He was anxiously waiting for an opportunity to declare his mind. He found one and throwing himself at the feet of Rāmānuja said: "Holy Sir! how I realise the effects of Yāmunā's petitions to Lord Varada. By them have you become the Pioneer of our Faith after discarding all worldly concerns. A holy band is gathering round you. I am happily one. See, how again Yāmunā's disciple, G. Pūrṇa, has doctored you with his special grace. May I not be so blessed by you in turn?" "Son, beloved," said Rāmānuja, "you must bide your time one year. That is my command." "Master," humbly submitted Kūrēṣa, "One year! Ah, it is intolerably long. Can I stand it? Shall I live so long, so long? I have heard that one month's fasting and lying at the door of the Master, is considered a good equivalent for the year's probation." So saying, Kūrēṣa put his word immediately into execution. Rāmānuja was moved by pity, and at the end of the month, he initiated him into the final principles of the Gītā.<sup>2</sup>

Dāsarathi was watching all the while. He found no rest for his mind till he learnt the saving truths. So he approached Rāmānuja and fell at his feet. "Teach me, also, I pray, Master," said he. "Son, my permission was for Kūrēṣa only. You must go to Pūrṇa and obtain his permission." Dāsarathi ran to T. Kōttiyūr, and threw himself before Pūrṇa. But Pūrṇa never gave him countenance. Dāsarathi held to his

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter VI, p. 40.

<sup>2</sup> See *Mumukshupada*, Introductory to *Charama-shloka*.



resolve, and repeated his importunity, but Pūrṇa as resolutely turned away from him. This went on for six months. If Dāṣarathī had any pride of birth or learning, this probation was good for him. He humbled himself again. Pūrṇa now glanced at him. "You are one of Rāmānuja's favoured, I surmise," asked he. "Yes, Sir! I am known as Dāṣarathī, I am come to learn the cream of Gītā-teachings from you." Pūrṇa said "Let every trace in thee cease, of the threefold egotism which troubles mankind, that of talent, wealth, and ancestry! Rāmānuja will be the best judge of thee in these matters. Go to him and wait on his will and pleasure. He will bless thee." "Be it as you will, Sir," said Dāṣarathī and humbly retired to Srīraṅgam. Dāṣarathī's return, Rāmānuja was watching, and when he came and fell at his feet, and related all that took place at T. Kōttiyūr, Rāmānuja, in the midst of many assembled disciples, said "Do you see? Dāṣarathī is now a changed person. If he had any notion of self-esteem before, how it hath disappeared now! What a transformation effected by my Guru! Rise, Dāṣarathī! thou art now qualified to hear high lessons of the Spirit. I will reveal them at once." So saying, he communicated to him the quintessence of the Gītā-teachings, and exclaimed joyously. "Aye, now indeed, I may claim as my own, my *Staff and Peasant*."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> विश्वामदो धनमदः स्तुतीयोऽभिजयो मदः ।

एते मदावलिषाणा मेतद्वसतादमः ॥

<sup>1</sup> *I.e.*, the two close disciples, Kūrīṣa and Dāṣarathī.

## CHAPTER XVI.

## RĀMĀNUJA'S INTERPRETATIONS.

Some time elapsed thus. Goshthi-Pūrṇa came on a visit to Srirangam, where he met his college friend Tiruṇālār Āṇḍan (Mālādhara)<sup>1</sup> He took him with him and went to see Rāmānuja in his retreat. Rāmānuja on seeing his Guru come, rose and receiving him with due respect, entered into conversation. "Rāmānuja" he addressed, "you are now to hear the utterances of our Holy Saints, the Tīru-vāy mozhi of St. Nammāshvār, to begin with I commend you to the care of my friend Mālādhara, who has been full well instructed in that lore by Yāmunāchārya." So saying, he placed Rāmānuja's hands in those of Mālādhara, and begging of the latter to take his trust through a course of the Prabandhas, left for his own town.

They began the new course of studies. But as Mālādhara gave out the explanations of each verse as he had heard them from his Guru, Yāmunā, Rāmānuja gave expanded or improved versions of the same. Mālādhara used to say that he never remembered such explanations given out by Yāmunā. "But they are right, Sir" and Yāmunā's mind was really that," Rāmānuja used to reply. In due course, they came to the verse *Arya-k-kalattu* [T Vāy-mozhi II, 3, 3]. Mālādhara explained it thus: "O God, when I was ignorant, thou gavest me the knowledge of my relation to Thee, and yet Thou hast confined me in this carcass which destroys this knowledge." "This cannot be, Sir" protested Rāmānuja, "if you consider the trend of the whole decad here [II, 3], it is an acknowledgment of all the manifold good, God did to the Saint. While so, one verse in the middle of the Decad cannot convey an accusation against God. So, by a transposition of the terms of the verse in question, the meaning becomes—"If *kalai* I was yet confined in this carcass which destroys knowledge, thou were pleased to bestow knowledge of my relation to Thee, O God!"<sup>2</sup> "I

<sup>1</sup> See No. 25, Hierarchic Table, in our *Lives of Āśhras*.

<sup>2</sup> Readers ought to read the original of this in the 2nd Volume of *Bhagavad-gāyānam*, if they wish to fully enjoy this intellectual banquet.

don't remember Yāmuna so explaining to me,' expostulated Mālādhara, "I like not such interpretations from thee." So saying, he ceased teaching farther. The news of this interruption of studies reached the ears of G. Pūrṇa. He journeyed thitheron to Sriṅgaṇa to inquire into the cause. Meeting Mālādhara, he asked for an explanation. "Compeer!" began Mālādhara, "our studies never go on smoothly, for Rāmānuja, I find, is too much for me. He has an eternal store of new interpretations. For instance, we had a passage at arms over St. Nammiah-vār's verse *Aṟiyi* &c. [II 3 3.] Whereas I construed it as conveying a spirit of invective against God for His ways of dealing with souls, Rāmānuja construed it as an expression of gratitude to God, so as to make verse 3 harmonise with the other verses of this Decad. Such a protesting spirit seemed to me a violation of a disciple's decorum, while his constructions also seemed at variance with our Yāmuna's mind. Hence I had to stop studying with an eccentric pupil like Rāmānuja." "But, pardon me," interrupted Pūrṇa, "Rāmānuja is right, for I remember our Yāmuna having so explained. You seem to have forgotten. Friend! Rāmānuja is incapable of going wrong. If any one knows Yāmuna's mind, it is he. Look upon him as like another Kṛṣṇa who went to Śāṇḍipani<sup>1</sup> for instruction. You are but a pretence. He knows all. No more be under the delusion that you are teaching him truths not already known to him. So, permit me as a friend, to lay it on you henceforth as a sacred duty to continue the Tira-vāy-moṣi from where you dropped it, even if, to do so, it were necessary on your part to wait on Rāmānuja, instead of his waiting on you. He is such disciple as his Gurus must go to him." So saying, G. Pūrṇa went to Rāmānuja's monastery, accompanied by Mālādhara and Mahāpūrṇa. Seeing them, Rāmānuja rose exultingly, and prostrating himself, welcomed them all. G. Pūrṇa thus made peace and saw to the Prahādha-studies being again pursued in right earnest.

They sat to the study again under these terms of conciliation. A passage was again being explained by Mālādhara. "Not

<sup>1</sup> Consult Tishhu-Poṇḍu.

so, Sire!" interrupted Rāmānuja. Yāmana meant it another way. "How dost thou know Yāmana?" excitedly queried Mālādhara, of Rāmānuja, "thou hast never conversed with him once in thy days. Thou hast sawt him after his death. And yet Thou darost to interpret his mind to me!" "With thy leave, Master," submitted Rāmānuja, "look upon me as the Ēkalavya<sup>1</sup> to Yāmana. That will explain how I understand him." "I understand thee now, Holy Rāmānuja. I find the words of my friend G. Pārma indeed confirmed by my own experience of thee. Thou art even an Avatāra. To me art thou teacher, not I to thee. I have learnt from thee many things that I had not learnt from Yāmana." So saying, Mālādhara rose and made obeisance to Rāmānuja.

Thus, without further impediments to progress, the study of a course of the Prabandhas was in due time completed. Mahāpārma now suggested to Rāmānuja that there were other mysteries yet, which if he so desired, he might learn from the venerable Tiruvaranga-p-perumāl Araiyar. Rāmānuja took the hint at once, and from that day forward engaged himself for six months to offer milk daily to Araiyar as a premium for learning. And to this he added the service of preparing for Araiyar a turmeric-paste (*maṇḍal-kippu*) for ablution-purposes, when the *adhyayana*-festival came round in the year. One day the preparation was found not quite to Araiyar's liking. Rāmānuja threw it away, and immediately prepared it anew. Araiyar was watching this solicitude on Rāmānuja's part. "He loves me as one may love God. He loves me, a son of God, as God Himself incarnate," thought Araiyar. "Come, noble disciple," said he, "you are fit to know the highest mystery. By your services to me you have earned it. So you lay claim to all that I have. Know then that God's apostles and representatives on earth are God Himself visible in that form. Our Śāstras hence proclaim —

<sup>1</sup> See 133rd Adhyāya, Ādi-Parva, Mahābhārata for the Story. Ēkalavya made a mud-image of Drōṇa, and learnt from this mere image of a Guru, all the science of archery.

"The Guru is Parabrahman Himself, is one's real Wealth, is the Object of love, and our Refuge. He is our Wisdom and the Way. Who preaches such a Saviour, is the Saviour of Saviours."<sup>1</sup>  
 "Know that God asleep in the Guru awakes, God invisible is the Guru visible and moving. The Gurus bring messages of God. They are God's mouthpieces. Through them, God chooses to teach mankind. Look upon the Guru (Saviour) then as God Himself on earth. Look upon him as St. Madhura-kavi<sup>2</sup> looked upon St. Nammāzhvār, as Lakshmana upon Rāma and Satrugṇa on Bharata. This is called the *Panchamāyāga*,<sup>3</sup> or the fifth and ultimate means of reaching God." Thus did Araiyār descant on the greatness and virtue of Saviours, as the constituted channels through which God becomes most accessible to mankind. "They are appointed and sent by God to perform the functions of salvation. They are empowered mediators between man and God. Who reject them reject God, and their salvation is imperilled thereby. This truth is hard to be realized by mankind, which is apt to deny the Saviour by the very fact of His moving with them, living with them and sharing with them all their joys and sorrows. The very intimacy breeds contempt. Those only steer clear of this danger of denial, who can pierce through the veil of the visible symbol of the Guru. Rāmānuja<sup>4</sup> seriously reflect over this truth and be blessed." Obtaining this truth, Rāmānuja became supremely happy.<sup>4</sup>

गुरुदेवपरमेश गुरुदेवपरंपराम् । गुरुदेवपर-काशो गुरुदेवपरायणम् ॥  
 गुरुदेवपरायणं गुरुदेवपरमात्मैः । यस्मान्मुमुक्षुर्दत्तः स तस्माद्गुह्यतरो गुरुः

[Kāśyapa-Saṁhitā]

आचार्यसहस्रहरिसाचार्यरूपीनरैरुक्तम् । [Pārshurāma]

<sup>2</sup> Read his life in our *Lives of Saints*. [See No. 10 in the Table, *Ibid*.]

<sup>3</sup> The other four Means being Karma, Jñāna, Bhakti and Prapatti. It is also called the *Charama-parva*. See Table of Soteriology, pp 573-574, our *Bhagavad-gītā*.

<sup>4</sup> I and my Father are one, said Christ. Our Upanishads say —  
 यस्मदेवेवमात्मैक्यमादेवेतत्तामुच्यते [Sādā Up. end].

That this is an old Indic doctrine may now be understood by all who may have doubted it ere this.

Here it may be asked, how one disciple can have more than one Guru ? It was Mahāpūrṇa who acted the first sacramental Guru to Rāmānuja, at Madhurāntakam, as already narrated. And yet we find Rāmānuja resorting to many Teachers for instruction. There is no serious spiritual objection to such a procedure, it is stated. For a king may entrust more than one minister of his, with the wealth of his realm, to be made over to his heir when he comes of age. Each minister discharges his particular trust in due season. Such was the case with Rāmānuja. For the great Yāmuna had made many, the custodians of Spiritual Truths, which were to be imparted to Rāmānuja, each in his turn. Rāmānuja was to have received them directly from Yāmuna, but later had ordained otherwise. Rāmānuja's hopes, which had been dashed to the ground when Yāmuna suddenly passed away, were now fulfilled. Yāmuna had signified to his disciples that Rāmānuja was to be the High Pontiff of their resuscitated Ancient Church, and the deposit of spiritual truths he had left with them was to be placed in his hands. The Gurus of Rāmānuja therefore were thus bound to discharge their sacred trust. When they did so, each in his time, they were relieved and happy. It may be the teacher or the disciple. The canon laid down is that whoso is qualified to receive spiritual truths must be told them, regardless of formalities otherwise prescribed, for the disciple to wait on the teacher and so on. A teacher, it is even said, becomes a teacher only when he has found a fit pupil, only when he has transferred to him his wisdom. Thus Rāmānuja's teachers became entitled to that honor only after teaching Rāmānuja, and disciples became true disciples only after becoming disciples of Rāmānuja. Rāmānuja is therefore described as the Central Gem in the precious necklace made up of the gems of Teachers and Disciples of the Vaishnava apostolic

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## CHAPTER XVII.

## RÂMÂNUJA'S MINISTRY BEGINS.

Râmânûja's studentship was now complete. He was already spiritual before intellectual. The naturally spiritual man was by means of intellectual accomplishments, to bequeath a legacy to the world in the shape of written works. He composed three in the beginning embodying the principles and practices of the Vaishnava faith. These were the *gôḍya-traya* (The Three Proves), the Daily Worship Manual called the *Nitya*, and the Commentaries on the *Bhagavad-Gîtâ*.<sup>1</sup> The cardinal doctrine established by him in these works is the Unity of Godhood expressed by the term *Nârâyana* of the *Taittiriya Upanishad* and others.<sup>2</sup> And Râmânûja disseminated the doctrines among many who were gathering about him, and thus did his ministry begin.

It was the practice of Râmânûja, as a mendicant who had abandoned the world, to visit seven houses daily and collect alms. Only upon this is the *Sanyâsa* to subsist, according to the *Yata-dharma*. Alms-begging is enjoined on the principle that the ascetic has nothing to call, or ought not to own, any worldly goods as belonging to him, as such owning begets a series of attachments necessarily and weds him again to worldly interests, and so show to the world that the world to the spiritual man is beggared before God, in other words, beggary means death to the world in order to live unto the spirit. This is the spiritual interpretation of the donor's mendicancy compassing eleemosynary merit to the donor. Both are abused in India. The worldly man ought not to beg, and the spiritual man ought not to bestow, — this is reversed in modern times. The law is the material man is the custodian of the spiritual man's body, and the spiritual man, of the material man's soul. The commodities of exchange between the two are substance and spirit. Each party has his laws and conditions for the exchange. Hence a spiritual-beggar is no burden upon society. Other

<sup>1</sup> This is the one we have English-translated.

<sup>2</sup> *I*de's Introduction to our *Lives of Saints*, and Topic 84 in our *Devine Wisdom*, for a disquisition.

beggars are indeed so, and ought to be interdicted from their professional preying upon others' honest labour. A spiritual beggar is a benefactor inasmuch as his very presence among men, not to say of the influence of his words on them, is a great moral and spiritual influence, elevating them from the gross to the ethereal, from the fleeting to the lasting. Such a monk-mendicant was our Rāmānuja.<sup>1</sup>

We have said above that Rāmānuja's main endeavour was to establish the Unity of Godhood. In doing so, he did not abstract God from His Universe,—a process tried by monism ending in negation,—but restored God to His Universe in all the fullness of His infinite nature, so to say. By his practice, he illustrated it, even when he went about his begging excursions. For it is chronicled that Rāmānuja, while so engaged one day in the thoroughfares of Srirangam, a few boys, form mere frolic, waylaid him and pointing to a figure like man which by their toes they drew on the dust, said:—“Boasted friar, here is your God. If He is everywhere, here He must be. Worship Him then.” Rāmānuja was delighted to hear the boys sermon to him thus. At once he put his bowl down, prostrated himself before the Figure on the floor, and thanking the boys went his way.

On another occasion he came across a number of boys in the streets. They were enacting all that they saw their elders doing in the Temple. They had described in the dust a diagram of the Srirangam Temple, with several chambers allotted therein for God, for His Consort, His Saints and so on. Regular worship they commenced, and it was now time to offer food to the several Deities. The boys procured the food easily, for

<sup>1</sup> Āpatamba in his *Dharma-Sāra*, says [II 5, 10].—

विषयेनिमित्तकवर्गे विगृही यज्ञो कालविधिपूर्वहितविषयविशेषः ॥१॥

तत्रपुत्रास्तदीश्वरकालाकिरेण् ॥२॥

इतिविधीन्वर्कस्तुनिकषणमितिच ॥ यत्राहिके ॥३॥

The gist of this is that unless conditions stated are present, begging is to be discouraged. Read *infra*, Rāmānuja's explanations to Kongū-parāṭṭi, on why great men go to poor houses making begging but a pretext.



they gathered the road-dust, made it into convenient heaps, and offered the same to their God pictured on the ground. Food so consecrated should be distributed next, to all the worshippers. That is the rule. So the boys did, and finding Rāmānuja in their midst. "God's food, Sir, take," cried they Rāmānuja fell reverently on the floor, and rising, as reverently stretched his hands and received the food and went his way.

Rāmānuja's stewardship in the Temple necessarily gave rise to bickerings on the part of the priests. They were jealous of his discipline and his growing power. Why not do away with this Sanyāsi, and let us freely revel in corruption? thought they. They would poison him, decided they. To one of the seven houses which Rāmānuja was fabled frequenting for alms, they went and prevailed upon the owner to mix poison with the alms and give it to him. In India, the house-wife is to perform the duty of doling out alms. So the husband told the house-wife to do the nefarious deed. She objected, but he persisted. She was obliged to obey. Rāmānuja came. With hands somewhat trembling, she doled out poisoned food to him, and prostrating herself before him, abruptly retired with eyes downcast. Her manner, he observed, was somewhat peculiar that day. This raised suspicion. He thought he would place the food before a dog. He did, and lo! it made the dogsick and giddy, it fell and died. "This is food with poison (*sa-gara*)" cried Rāmānuja. "Let the poison (*gara*) go to its birth place (*adgara*)"<sup>1</sup>. So saying with a pun on the word *sagara*, he cast the food into the waters of the Kaveri river close by.<sup>2</sup>

From that day Rāmānuja would fast, but soon news of this flew to G. Pūrṇa who left from T. Kottiyār for Srirangam to set matters right before it was too late. Pūrṇa had neared Srirangam and was crossing the dry bed of the Kaveri river in the midday sun, which was scorching the head and the feet. Rāmānuja, with his chosen, went to meet the Guru, and fell prostrate before him on the burning sands. Pūrṇa did not bid

<sup>1</sup> This has reference to the Churning of the Milk-Sea Legend, when poison was one of the products of that sea.

him rise. Kidāmbi-Ācchān by name, a disciple of Rāmānuja, who loved him much and who had accompanied him, watched this with painful expectancy. Finding the suspense insupportable, and provoked beyond patience, he cried to Pūrṇa. "Sire! are these the exactions of civilities between Teachers and Disciples? Doth thy code of etiquette permit such infliction of cruelty? Doth thy stony heart demand, that a tender flower like my Rāmānuja should be fried and roasted before thee like this? Hast thou sense? Hast thou the milk of humanity? I care not for thy absurd regulation." Thus fulminating his oburgations at the Gura, he swiftly raised Rāmānuja and hugged him to his breast. A moment of the most painful anxiety and suspense, it was too, for Pūrṇa, for he was by this means trying to find out the person, who truly loved Rāmānuja. Looking now at Ācchān with eyes beaming with approbation, Pūrṇa said: "Ācchān, thou art the sort of person I have been looking for. Now that I have found thee, my fears for Rāmānuja's future safety are dispelled. I appoint thee his body-guard, and no one but thyself shall cook for Rāmānuja. Thou alone shalt discharge that most important and holy duty henceforth." Kidāmbi-Ācchān became thus the *Mahānantchārya*, or Rāmānuja's *Master of the Hearth*.

Thus shielded from schemes against his life, Rāmānuja was spiritedly diffusing to all earnest comers, the philosophy of true religion. An important event came about at this juncture. A profound Brāhman scholar there was, by name Yajña-vārta. Wherever he went, he entered into debates with learned men on knotty points of the Vedānta, invariably carrying off the palm of victory. He went for a bath in holy Ganga, and there also he entered the arena of Vedāntic discussion and vanquished the disputants. He became the one-staffed Sanyāsin,—a proclamation this that he was professor in the successful establishment of the *Mugdā-vāda*, or the illusoriness of the Kosmos.

Fascinated by subtleties of his sophistry, many became adherents to his cause, and he rose in fame, and pride as well. But he was told that there was a Rāmānuja at Srirangam, and until he crossed swords with him, his victory would not be

complete. This roused his vanity. Mightily did he prepare himself for the contest. He armed himself with heaps of books and arguments, and came down to Srirangam, with his band of disciples, and with all the ostentation and demonstration of a big Pandit. Dashing up to Rāmānuja in all the style of an egotist, he invited him to an intellectual warfare. Rāmānuja declared he was ready. "What is the wager for our combat?", he asked of the savant. "If I am defeated," he said, "I will embrace your faith." "If you win," said Rāmānuja, "I shall give up my ministry in the world." So staking, they fixed eighteen days for the disputation. For sixteen days it waxed hot, and yet there appeared no odds between them. But on the seventeenth day, the balance began to swing in favour of Yajña-mūrti, Rāmānuja having felt the want of an argument to overpower the fiery array of them on the side of the adversary. Yajña-mūrti, reading the signs of discomfiture, and puffed with pride, left Rāmānuja in that situation, as if in contempt, and stalked out of the monastery for that day. Rāmānuja felt the situation keenly, and poignant grief entered into his heart. Tortured with thought, he shut himself up in the chapel, and after worshipping his own Lord Varada there in the usual routine, prayed to Him thus in agony — "Holy God! if I, a weak mortal, am repulsed in the fight, Thy Cause can never be repulsed — a cause which has been established on earth of yore, by such saints as Nammāshvār and sages as Yāmunāchārya. So far, the success attending our Disputation is because of Thy will. By Thy Holy Word (Revelations), Thou hast been justified and demonstrated in all Thy variety of manifestation as well as essence. Now it hath pleased thee to pitchfork a false prophet on Thy world-stage and let him dance. Let it be, if such is Thy will." Imploring thus, Rāmānuja fasted and slept. The Lord Varada appeared to him in a dream and thus spoke — "Beloved, be not vexed. We are giving thee an able adherent to help Thy mission. To-morrow, the last day, level at Yajña-mūrti all the quiver-full of arguments against miydaida, to be found in the works of thy Grand-Guru Yāmunā. Rāmānuja bounded with joy, and performing all the routine duties of the day, and prostrating to his chapel-God, ventured forth into the debating hall.

Yajña-mūrti was already there. Rāmānuja's disguised manner, stately gait, and glory of countenance, struck terror into him. A premonition of defeat, it seemed to him already. "What a contrast," exclaimed he, "between the state in which I left him yesterday, and that in which I see him this day! He is advancing towards me in all the majesty of a mad elephant. This is surely extraordinary. He must be more than human." So thinking to himself, he instinctively rose, and advancing towards Rāmānuja, cried "Sire, no more words between us, I pray. I confess I am beaten." As he said, he placed Rāmānuja's sandals on his head, and implored him to deign to gather him to his holy fold. "What is this?" said Rāmānuja, surprised, "I never expected this from you. Our case is still contested. Let us argue it through and see where it will land us." "Pardon me, Sire," submitted Yajña-mūrti, "no more fight. When I actually see you are one with God, I dare not open my mouth again." "And yet," rejoined Rāmānuja, "I wish to say that the *Māyā* doctrine necessarily strips God (*Para-brahman*) of any attributes. But from our Scriptures we derive no support for an attributeless God. Such texts as that 'God is Truth' &c., become untruthful. But if you justify the God of attributes, because of His becoming so conditioned by *avidyā* (ignorance), then 'how is such a God, who allows His Light to be eternally obscured by such ignorance, ever to get rid of it?'<sup>1</sup> If you say, what of it, then you will thrust yourself into a position from which there is no escape. For, you will have postulated two eternal things. God and Ignorance, or knowledge and non-knowledge, which is dualism and therefore antagonistic to monism. In your attempt to establish monism or non-dualism, you necessarily negate every thing else than Brahman, but in that very act, you posit a duality, viz., ignorance, which eternally thwarts that Brahman! The pampered elephant of *śānta* (monism) therefore gets all answers, stuck in the mire of

<sup>1</sup> शब्दरूपसंज्ञा तद्विचित्रकृतम् ।

अज्ञानोपेक्षितस्यैव सत्यस्यैव तद्विचित्रकृतम् । [Rāmānuja]

This is the controversy turning round the term *personality*, again and again cropping up in all Viśiṣṭhādvaita works.



ferred on him all the sacraments of a *Vaiṣṇava*,<sup>1</sup> and the name of *Arulāṇḍa-p-perumāl* *Emberumanār*, which was his own name combined with that of the Lord *Varada*, by whose grace he was enabled to acquire a golden convert to his Faith. The Sanskrit of this is *Devarāja-muni* or *Devarāt*. *Rāmānuja* led him to *Ranga's* temple, where he was made a recipient of all the honors due to a member of the Faith, and brought him back to his monastery, where he was introduced to the worship of his Lord *Varada*, and consecrated food thereof given him. The partaking of food completed the initiation and the convert became a part and parcel of the *Vaiṣṇava* community. A course of studies relating to the *Prabandhas* and other esoteric teachings was gone through, and the love-religion of the *Vaiṣṇavas* was thus spread before him, at which his heart melted and the intellect bowed.

*Rāmānuja* had in *Devarāt* a great access of strength. His addition made his flock brilliant. He joined the other two jewels of *Rāmānuja's* band, *Dāyaraṭhī* and *Kūrēja*. Classes in philosophy &c., were ably conducted with these members. *Rāmānuja's* fame went abroad. *Anand-āshvān* or *Anantasūri*,<sup>2</sup> *Ecehān*, *Tondanūr-Nambi* and *Marudūr-Nambi*, hastened to become his disciples. When they came, he directed these to *Devarāt* for initiation into the Faith. He obeyed but declared that *Rāmānuja* was thus trying to hang heavy stones to the neck of a poor sparrow! "Beware", he said to the new disciples, "I am but his vassal, his tool. *Rāmānuja* is your real Saviour. Me, forget; but him, remember."

<sup>1</sup> वषट्कारं च संस्कारं वैष्णव्युपनिषिष्टवृत्तम् ।

सर्वायमेषु वसतां श्रीशुद्धादिभोजनम् ॥

उपधीर्तान्दशदश पालेयनपवित्रकम् ।

कौपीनं कटिमुखश्च नत्वाऽप्यस्त्रदायुषम् ॥ [Ibid].

<sup>2</sup> No. 28; Hierarchy Table, [see our *Lives of Āshvāns*.] He was born in *Kirangūr*, near *Srirangapatna*, *Madhūr*.

<sup>3</sup> A holy place near *Melkote* where the big *Motitalār* *pearl-tank* is situated. See *infra* when *Rāmānuja* comes to this place.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

## RĀMĀNUJA'S FIRST TOUR.

Rāmānuja's school was thus filling. A course of studies in the Prabandhas was being conducted, and the verse in St Nammāshvar's *Tiru vāy-mozhi Oshiril-kulam*, was reached. This verse is of the Decad (II. 3, addressed to Lord Venkatespati or Srinivāsa of the Holy Tirupati-Hill. It says —

*Ever joined to Thee at all times,  
Services all, we must render Thee,  
O Father ! and Light of the Hill,  
From which limpid rills trickle down !*

On reading and explaining this Rāmānuja went to the Sacred Hill, called *Pashupa-mantapa* ' ecstatic thought, and glancing on the assembly of scholars before him, asked "Is there any one amongst ye, prepared to stay in Tirupati, make flower-gardens, and daily serve Srinivāsa with flowers thereof ?" Ananta-Sūri stood up, "Bid me go, Sire," said he and quickly went to Tirupati and there getting up a flower-garden, carried flowers daily to the Lord there. He called the garden *Rāmānugam*.

Rāmānuja was informed of all this from time to time, and he longed to visit Tirupati himself. For this purpose, he swiftly went through the *Tiruvāymozhi* course, and proceeding to the Temple, prayed to the Lord Ranga thereon to permit him to go on a tour to Kāंची, Tirupati, and other shrines. "Granted, but return soon," was the reply that came.

Obtaining thus the holy permission of Lord Ranga, Rāmānuja left Srirangam with his disciples on a tour, the first of the kind after his appointment as the Pontiff of the rising Vaishnava-faith. On his way north, he visited Māhita-kshētra, and other shrines, arriving at Dēhali-Nagara, or Tiru-k-kōvalūr, where he rendered homage to Lord Trivikrama, who appeared to the Three First Āshvāra.<sup>1</sup> Thence he proceeded to Chitra-

<sup>1</sup> See p. 206, for this and other terms, of our Lives of Āshvāra.

<sup>2</sup> See their account in our Lives of Āshvāra.

kūta or Chudambaram, but hearing that it was infested with the most heinous Śaiva, left the place thinking that it would not be possible for him to introduce any reform in the place in a hurry.

He next arrived at Aśita-sahasra-grāma, where he had two disciples by name Yajñeṣa and Varadārya.<sup>1</sup> Of these, Yajñeṣa was very rich and Varada very poor. To the former Rāmānuja sent two of his disciples to announce his arrival, and ask him to be his good host during his halt. Yajñeṣa, when the disciples came, was in an arrogant mood and heeded them not, thinking that when Rāmānuja chose to come himself to his doors, he would receive him in proper form. At this cold treatment the disciples returned to Rāmānuja with fallen faces and reported to him the conduct of Yajñeṣa. "Then we shall not enter his doors," said Rāmānuja, "we shall go to our poor disciple Varada at once and without notice." So saying, they threaded their way to Varada's lowly hut. But he was absent on his daily begging rounds. His wife, the good Parutī-kollai, eyed them coming. She wished to step forward and welcome them, but she had such a thread bare garment to cover her—owing to abject poverty—that she could not with any decorum show herself to any. So, she sheltered herself behind a door, and clapped her hands so that Rāmānuja might take it for a signal of welcome, and not go away elsewhere, as that would be disastrous to her soul's welfare, inasmuch as Rāmānuja's condescension in having come to her poor house would prove profitless. Rāmānuja at once understood the delicate situation in which the poor lady was placed, and taking off the colored cloth which covered his head, flung it through a window into the house. She picked it up and wearing it, approached Rāmānuja whom, in welcoming to her house, she prostrated most humbly and said: "O my gracious Guru, you are most welcome to my humble cottage. Pray accept this water for

<sup>1</sup> The latter's full name is Parutī-kollai Varadācharya, and his wife is the famous Parutī-kollai Nācchiyār, Sanskritised into Kārpās-ārādāmbikā.



washing your hands and feet, and be seated here." She then thought to herself like this :—"What mighty merit must mine have been what austerities must I have done, what gifts must I have bestowed, in order that Rāmānuja, who is Vishnu Himself incarnate, come on earth to save mankind, should come to our house. Divine grace has descended upon our undeserving selves. For the Guru (Saviour) is God Himself, He is the Good. All our goods, body and soul are His. The true disciple is he who thinks and acts thus. So do our Scriptures say. But I have not a handful of grain in my house, nor a single coin wherewith to worship the worthy Saṁnyāsin. My husband is out on begging, but his petty pickings will not suffice for the worthy guests. To honor a guest like Rāmānuja, I will even sin. St. Parakāla, in the old days, robbed and cheated people in order to serve God. He ensnared himself in fastnesses, waylaid men, stripped them of their goods, and offered them to God. Even Lord Ranga Himself was once eased by him of all his precious jewels, and with them feasts were given to the faithful.<sup>1</sup> Creatures whirl round the wheel of Saṁsāra, but the Guru comes with his teachings, and extricates them from this, and gives them God. To repay the Guru for this is impossible. Hence I will even sell my body and worship him wherewith. For God Himself has said :—"If for My sake thou sinnest, it becometh merit, all merit without reference to Me becometh sin."<sup>2</sup> The Guru is even greater than God. Therefore I shall have recourse to the rich merchant of this place, who has been casting his adulterous eyes on me for a long time. I shall now let him have his wish, let him feed on this wormful body. The wealth he will on this account bestow on me, shall all be used for the entertainment of my honored guests." So thinking she addressed Rāmānuja thus :—"Holy Sir, rest here but a moment. By your grace, you shall anon see my house filled with articles to feast you and yours with." So saying, the virtuous lady left the house and hur-

<sup>1</sup> Read his life in our Lives of Saints.

<sup>2</sup> मांभक्तिं कृतं पापकरो बुद्धिमायकल्पते ।

मायनाद्वैतमुक्तं पुनर्मायामकल्पते ॥

ried to the merchant, and forcing a most bewitching smile into her face to please him, said " Good man, time has now arrived for the fulfilment of thy long-cherished desire. My Gura is pleased to come to my house. And I have to entertain them, for which all food-stuffs and vessels are wanted. Please order them at once." The merchant, studying the standing beauty more than ever, and inflamed at the overtures she herself made this time, obeyed her commands without a word, and sent an abundance of things with her. The good woman stood before Rāmānuya in all humility with these things. He was struck with her devotion and commanded that she should herself cook for him,—a great privilege, indeed, bestowed on a woman by a holy person (in India). She did so. And Rāmānuya and his disciples, after bathing and worshipping God, partook of the holy food, offered him in love, and rested in her house, his whole being pulsating with blessings for her.

While thus Rāmānuya was resting in his loving votary's house, Varadārya, the husband, returned home after his begging. The good wife related to him all the circumstances beginning with the Gura's arrival and up to the repast which she was able to spread before him during his absence, and the worship and joy which she, in his absence, was able to give to the illustrious guest. " Madam," said the husband jubilant, " though thou art young, thy wits are old, else how couldst thou have done such a grand task? Thou art not a wife, but a goddess I ken thee. Nor art thou a nominal disciple, for, for thy saviour, thou hast sacrificed all, even thy woman's honor." Applauding her thus, he went to Rāmānuya and clasped his feet firmly, then rising and with palms joined, praised him thus " O Prince of men! King of ascetics! a thousand salutations to thee. For the redemption of things life-ful and lifeless, thou art born amongst us, Vishnu Himself, the Lord of the Universe. Thou art all-knowing, and all-wise, and art the very reflection of Hari. As, in a deep dark well, wailow creatures entangled in the meshes of their varied deeds, who else but thou art able to lift them from this dismal abyss? who but the magician can draw the venom out of the cobra-bitten person? who but the sun can dispel darkness? what but cool water can allay a man's thirst?

The *samaira*-stricken sinner finds relief only by worshipping thy holy feet. Praise be to my Guru, by whose magic the evil spirit left the princess and itself was redeemed. Hadst thou not appeared amongst us, how could a sinner like me have been saved? Learned men there are by the hundred, but their ways are *padhana*'s, leading them downward. How gracious! thy holy *śrīpa* were directed to the abode of a poor creature like myself. The very sight of thee has absolved me of all my sins. I am content. I rest in peace, and so do my ancestors." Rāmānuja blessed him and giving him the *Sri-pada-tīrtha*, let him partake of food (*prasāda*). He was struck with joy at the unity of heart and purpose, this excellent pair possessed, and dwelt with them for some time.

The pair now thought of returning the kindness of the merchant. They both went with Rāmānuja's *tīrtha* and *prasāda*, and delivering them to him, asked him to partake of the same, and then do what he liked with the wife. He left. The merchant's heart leapt with joy, but when he drank the holy water and ate the holy food, he felt within him a strange revolution. His carnal intent for the damsel gave way to wisdom and worship. He walked round her and threw himself before her, and with hands upraised in devotion said:—"Madam, thou art my mother, and thy husband is my father. The darkness of un-wisdom had overspread my mind, making me a fool and lusty after thee. I fall at thy feet, mother. Pardon me. Protect me. Take me to your great Guru and throw me, a slave, at his holy feet. Subject me to any penance by which my sin may be expiated. Let me walk in the path of righteousness anyhow." The good dame told her husband of all this remorseful confession and begged him to quiet the convulsed soul of the merchant. All this was marvellous. Anon Varadārya bent his steps to the penitent man and leading him to Rāmānuja, cast him at his feet. Rāmānuja, who inquired how all this came about, was told all. His surprise was equal to his joy. He had made a good disciple, to whom therefore he duly administered all the five *Vaishnava* sacraments.<sup>1</sup> It is chroni-

<sup>1</sup> i.e. The *Pañcha Samāhara*, already described. Cp.: "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and Fire [8. Luke, III. 16.]"

pled that this disciple thenceforward shone as bright as the summer moon, having placed all his wealth at the disposal of Rāmānuja, whose fame thus spread all over the country.

Yajñeṣa, the rich disciple, knew nothing of all this. Whereas he expected Rāmānuja would be coming to him, probably he was on his way. So he had gathered together many things at home to feast his Guru, and was prepared in other ways to receive him, as he thought. He waited thus with his relatives, but there was no sign of Rāmānuja coming. This set him pondering, and he left home in quest and despatched other men also. They learnt that Rāmānuja had bent his steps to Varadārya's house, after the indifferent manner in which his two messengers had been treated by Yajñeṣa. These tidings carried they to Yajñeṣa. On hearing it, he fell to weeping, and hurrying to Varadārya's house, cast himself at the holy feet of Rāmānuja, beseeching his pardon. Rāmānuja lovingly lifted him up and read to him a sermon thus, calculated to be useful to the whole world. "Yajñeṣa, listen. What I utter is good for thy soul. A Vaiṣṇava should require the five Samakāras, should know the five Truths, and follow his saviour. But more than all this is the service to those who are godly. The two messengers that came to thee were Vaiṣṇavas, godly men. They came as guests besides, and were way worn. But thou thou didst eject from thy threshold. This did not become thee. Thou shouldst have welcomed them, washed their feet, fanned them, fed them and worshipped them in every way befitting Vaiṣṇava-victors. They are Viṣṇu Himself in that form. After they had eaten, thou shouldst have eaten what was left as thy *prasāda*. When this course is strictly followed, that shows a real Vaiṣṇava. But when it is followed for the sake of show, fame or gain, it is as good as not done. Houses of show, fame or gain, Yajñeṣa, are not our houses. What pleases God is sacrifice made without motive (*adṛiṭa-dāna*). "Yajñeṣa heard this and was ashamed. "Lord," he prayed lowly, "I am undone, extend to me forgiveness, and accept me." "Son, listen," said Rāmānuja, "thou shalt make amends by daily washing clean the clothes of the Vaiṣṇavas here, and thus be

saved " So commanding, Rāmānuja left *Aṣṭa-sahasra-grāma* with his disciples and by way of *Tirukkōcalūr* or *Dēhālī nagara*,—where he visited the ancient shrine of *Trivikrama* and the Three First *Āzhvāra*<sup>1</sup>—reached *KâŇchī*. He first entered the monastery of *KâŇchī-pūrṇa*, who was still living, and prostrated himself before the venerable sage, dedicating a verse to his memory —

शैमन्मन्त्रिपुत्रिवन्दे कमलपतिनन्दनम् ।  
वदशक्तिप्राप्तद्वन्द्वसंस्थानपरायणम् ॥

The joy of *Pūrṇa* at seeing Rāmānuja covered with glory, knew no bounds. He led him lovingly to the Temple of Lord *Varada*—the God of *KâŇchī*, it will be remembered, who granted Rāmānuja to Lord *Ranga* of *Srirangam*. As he reverently walked, he fell on the floor before the entrance-cupola, (the *Gopura*) and the *Āṣa-kūtī* deity there. He entered the gate and washed himself in the holy pond *Ananta-earu*. With the twelve holy names of God he consecrated his body next, and visited *Jūāṇa-p-perāṇ* (*Varāha*) in the outer enclosure. Proceeding farther, he bowed successively to the *Āzhvāra*, *Bali-pīṭha*, and the *Jaya-vijayās*, the celestial Door-keepers. Wind-ing round, he saluted *Ādi-ṣeṭṭa* or *Ananta*, and the Holy Ant-hill, and the great hall to the east of it where Yāmunā's gracious eyes had for the first time descended on him and elected him as the future Minister of the Faith. Here he repeated the memorial verse for Yāmunā :—

नमोनमोयामुनाय यामुनायनमोनमः ।  
नमोनमोयामुनाय यामुनायनमोनमः ॥

Thence he visited *Kariya-māṇikyul-t-emberumān* and looked up reverently to the *vimāṇa* (tower) over the Holy of Holies, then bowed to the goddess of the culinary apartments,

<sup>1</sup> See their account in our Lives of *Āzhvāra*.

and then *Peram-dēva*, the Consort of Lord Varada, dedicating to Her the verse —

ममप्रसन्नमनसामदविन्दुनिपतिनीम् ।  
महामहामदीश्वरीं वन्देवदद-माम् ॥<sup>1</sup>

Thence (*Āśvins U-dikṣita* (the Archangel) (*Śiva*), *Garuḍa*<sup>2</sup>, called the Large-foot (*Periya-taruvāḷ*), *Vishvakāśana*, the Lord of Hosts, and then ascending the steps of the *Hasthi-Giri* (or Elephant-Hill), Lord Varada was reached, Kāñcī pūrṇa all the time leading, and Rāmānuja following. Rāmānuja threw himself before his old Patron God, and receiving *tīrtha*, *prastā*, and *Śathakāpa*, returned with mind steeped in divine bliss.

He informed Pārna of his intention to proceed north to Tirupati to visit the Lord Venkata. Pārna congratulated Rāmānuja on the joy that was in store for him by the intended trip, and bade him god-speed. He was journeying on thus with his adherents, when he lost his way. On looking round, a man was found drawing water from a well. "Show us the way, good man," he asked. "This way, gentlemen", said he showing the way. "In what way can I show my gratitude to this person?" Questioning himself thus, Rāmānuja prostrated himself before the pikotta-man. Seeing this, all the disciples did the same, astonished though at Rāmānuja's spiritual ruses of men and things,—uncommon of course to other men. The track shown was a straight one, and led unmistakably to the foot of the Holy Tirupati Hill. Here the Ten Āhāvāra are enshrined. Due observance was made to them and the Holy Hill itself, rising from there in sacred grandeur. Rāmānuja would not mount the hill for fear of desecrating it with the touch of his feet, and so remained at the foot for some time, when

<sup>1</sup> *Manning*—*Spouse beloved of Varada, praise to Thee.*

*Is traits Thee, perfect, In Lotus ever abiding,*

*—Mother of all the worlds.*

The Three Tenants are *Annapurṇā*, *Anayasasakṣetṛa*, and *Anaṅga*. *Ādṛgāṇa* meaning the Three relationships in which souls stand to God, *i. e.* "Destined for God," "Disposible by God," "Enjoyable by

God." These are mysteries of religion which can never be properly understood by means of even the best translations. Our first difficulty is the want of appropriate words.

<sup>2</sup> The *Keraḷa*,

Vitthala-Déva, the king of the Tondlra country, struck with the fame of Rāmānuja, became his disciple, and brought to him abundant wealth, with which he established a village of thirty houses, with thirty small estates attached to each, and granting them to thirty deserving families attached to his band named the village *līa Mandayam*. The news that Rāmānuja had arrived reached the ears of the venerable Śiṣṭāla-Pūrṇa and others residing on the Hill. They swiftly descended and heartily greeting Rāmānuja, asked him to go up the hill with them to see the Lord Venkata (Appa). "Look, Sire," Rāmānuja addressed Pūrṇa, "the Ten Āshvārā have remained at the foot without daring to tread on the Hill. How can I do so now? It satisfies me quite to remain with the Āshvārā here, and do them services." "If you won't go, Rāmānuja," said Pūrṇa, "neither shall we go." "Then be it as you will, Sire," so saying, Rāmānuja bathed, and proceeding to the Tamarind tree, at the foot of the Hill, did obeisance to the Holy Hill, and saying "By the foot, he ascends,"<sup>1</sup> tremblingly climbed he. As he crossed the seven hills and dales, he enjoyed the charming panorama of nature presented to his sight, the rills trickling down the hill slopes, vegetation low and high adorned with flowers of all imaginable colors and the hills and the valleys teeming with animal life—the most interesting and mischievous of these being the monkeys. Pūrṇa had gone in advance, and by the time Rāmānuja reached the *Tira p-pariyettā* rock, he returned with Lord Venkata's *tirtha* and *prāṇḍa*, to welcome him. "Could not some youngster be deputed for this work, venerable Sire, instead of yourself coming to do me these honors?" asked Rāmānuja of Pūrṇa. He replied, "Sire, I searched all the four corners of this place for one younger than myself. I could not find one. I am the youngest, hence I have come to welcome you." On hearing this language of humility on the part of a venerable person like Pūrṇa, Rāmānuja and his fol-

<sup>1</sup> *गङ्गेनामरोहति* *Paripants-rodai* is one of the God meditations taught by the Upanishads [vide No. 11, in the Table of the Vidyās, p. 179 of our Bhagavad Gītā]. The aspirant to God, when he proceeds

to Vaikuntham is said to place his feet on the Holy Seat of God, even as a child fearlessly treads on its mother's lap. See *Kaushitaki Upanishat*, 1st Chapter.





entered the gate *Sambata*, visited in order *Madai-ppalli* (cook-rooms), *Idga-āḍa* and *Tiru-maṇḍa-maṇḍapa*, *Piḷṅkātara* and *Vṛṅgata-ti-aru* (*Nṛsiṃha*). Here he looked up reverently at the *Āṇanda nāḷaya vimāna*, (capitol over the Holy of Holies), crossed the *Kalasekṅkara* threshold, until at last his vision was blessed with the Blissful Image of *Śrīnivāsa* within—the God in the Heart—resplendent with all the Holy Weapons and Ornaments, and *Śrī* in His Bosom<sup>1</sup> “Abode of Grace (*Śrīnivāsa*)!” *Rāmānuja* exclaimed, “I have fallen at Thy Holy Feet,” and so saying, he stretched himself before God, and rising, stood transfixed before the Beatific Spectacle, with hands raised and folded. *Tīrtṅa* and *praśāda* were given, which he received in all humility and stayed to see the ablation-ceremony (*Tīrumanjanam*), and the *Rati*-festival of *Aṅga-ppirṇu*. “This is indeed Heaven,” he cried, “this is indeed the abode of angels, I must not stay here long lest I desecrate the Holy Place.” “But three days in a Holy Shrine, the visitor ought to stay,” remonstrated *Pārṇa*. “So be it,” said *Rāmānuja*, and after three days were over, he walked into the Shrine, *Pārṇa* leading, to take leave. As he stood before Lord *Śrīnivāsa*, a voice came from Him (i.e., the Image) “Have we not already conferred on thee in our Southern House (= *Śtirangam*) both the kingdom, the material as well as the spiritual (*Ubhaya-vidhātī*)?” “Thy pleasure, Almighty!” responded *Rāmānuja*; and descended the Holy Hill with *Pārṇa*.

In the Lower *Tirupati*, *Rāmānuja* sojourned for a year in the house of *Srīvāsa-pārṇa*, partaking of his food there and reading with him the *Rāmāyaṇa*, the first of the *Itihāsa*. Here he found *Govinda*—his maternal cousin—engaged in doing all kinds of services to *Pārṇa*. One day, *Rāmānuja* found him prepare the bed for his Guru, and sleep on it first himself. He reported this strange conduct of *Govinda* to *Pārṇa*, who sent for him and asked for an explanation, enquiring further what punishment a disciple, who so behaved, deserved?

<sup>1</sup> *Śrī*=the Logos=the Sophia=the Son in the bosom. Cp. John I, 18 “The only-begotten Son who is in the bosom of the Father.” See Topics 126 and 137 in our *Divine Wisdom*.

Govinda submissively said "Such an act, Sue! surely deserves perdition, but listen. If by my trying your leg myself beforehand, I make myself sure there be nothing in it rough or knotty which may press against your soft body, sure there be no insect to bite and disturb you when you sleep, it matters little if I go to hell." Rāmanuja was delightfully astonished at this strange explanation, and his love towards Govinda increased.

On another day, Rāmanuja had gone out on a visit to Pūrṇa's Holy Garden, while he was returning, on the way he observed Govinda put his fingers into the fangs of a snake, and withdrawing them go to bathe, and proceed to Pūrṇa's house to perform the usual services. Feeling curious at this unusual act of Govinda's, he questioned him. He explained that he saw the snake open its mouth as he approached and he found, on examination, that it had a thorn on its tongue. He extracted the same from it to relieve the suffering creature, and then went about his business. "What a tender heart possesses thee, Govinda!" said Rāmanuja to him, struck with wonder.

The reading of the Holy Rāmāyana was now finished.<sup>1</sup> And Rāmanuja humbly begged Pūrṇa's permission to return to Srirangam. You have come so far, noble soul," said Pūrṇa, "what have I done for you?" "Sire," answered Rāmanuja, "when I learnt that our dear Govinda went astray, it caused

<sup>1</sup> The following inscriptional notes will be useful —[pp 28-29, Vol III. Epigraphia Carnatica, by B. L. Rice] —"The grant in this case was made, it is said, to a grandson of Śrīśaṅkapūrṇa or Tātāchārya, who had received the name of Tāta from (the God) Venkateśa (of Tirupati), and was guru to the author of the Bhāṣya, (meaning thereby Rāmānujāchārya, who wrote the Viśiṣṭhādvaita-vedānta-bhāṣya). The reference here is to the story about Śrīśaṅkapūrṇa, known as Bhūṛi-Śrīśaṅkapūrṇa (in Tamil, Periya Tiruṇālai Namb), the maternal uncle of Rāmānujā-

chārya, that one day when he was engaged in the service of God Venkateśa at Tirupati, the God was heard to say to him, "Give me water, Tāta!" whence he acquired the name of Tātāchārya.

The following memorial verse, recited even now by all Śrīvaiṣṇavas before commencing *Edmāyasa*, was dedicated to Pūrṇa विनायक स्थापितमहाय प्रचेतसदेसफलप्रदाय । श्रीपरमकारोत्तमदेशकाय श्रीसैलपूर्वायनमो नमस्ते ॥ He is said to have explained the *Edmāyasa* in 24 different ways, or with 24 different meanings, to Rāmānujāchārya.

me heartache; I was pondering how to reclaim him, when you, Sire, fulfilled my heart's wish by circumventing the poor heretic, by preaching to him the True Faith, pointing out to him the dangers of the path he had strayed into and otherwise convincing him of the Truths of our Religion and thus by destroying the perverse notions he had formed in his wandering mind, restored him to our holy fold. What better achievement can be effected than this? Permit me to ask yet another favour of you, Sire,—can you part with him, and let me have him?" Without a moment's thought, "come, Govinda," called Pūrṇa, "thou art from this moment, Rāmānuja's own. I make a free gift of thee to him. Go with him and be to him, I command, all that thou hast been to me. Nothing less will please me."

Govinda said not a word, but followed Rāmānuja, after prostrating himself before his Guru. They all now left Tirupati, and visited on their way home the Holy Places of Ghatikāchalām, Tiru-p-patkuzhi where the holy well *Grudhira Saras* and other holy waters are situate—, and Tiruvakkā, and in due course reached Kāñchi, whereto he was welcomed as usual by Sage Kāñchi-pūrṇa.

Govinda was found to grow cheerless, and was day by day losing health. Rāmānuja was watching him decline, and divining that separation from his beloved Āchārya must be gnawing at his heart, producing all the outward symptoms of grief, he thought it prudent to send him back to Tirupati. So, he bade him depart, giving him two Srivaishnavas as escorts to see him safe to his destination. Govinda reached Tirupati, and stood outside his Āchārya's house, in mute devotion. The attendants entering informed Srināya of the return of his old disciple,—who was standing at the door. Pūrṇa was displeased and indignantly cried:—"Let the mad fellow depart. He ought not to cross my threshold." Pūrṇa's wife watched this and interposing begged her husband that one who had come so far and hungry and tired, should not be so summarily dismissed, but that he might be permitted to have rest and food. "No," gruffly said the husband, "no such consideration can

be shown to a solid thing. A sold cow cannot be given grass. Let him be off."

Govinda spoke not a word, and tired and hungry as he was, he left with the two Srivaishnavas immediately, and reaching Kāñchi—where Rāmānuja was still sojourning—stood before him like a dumb statue. The Srivaishnavas told Rāmānuja all that had taken place at Tirupati. Rāmānuja admired the farsightedness on the one hand of Srīśaṅka, and on the other, the implicit obedience of Govinda, whom he gradually won over, with kind treatment and sage counsels to himself. Govinda thus became in time reconciled to his new environment.

Rāmānuja now bade adieu to Kāñchi and Pūrṇa, and duly taking leave of Lord Varada, left the place, and in due time returned to Srirangam. He was met by all the notables, elders and dignitaries of Rāṅga's Faṇe, and conducted thereto with joyful ceremony. "Hast thou, beloved, visited My North Abode (Tirupati)?" thus enquired Lord Ranga of Rāmānuja, who stood reverently at the door; and bestowing on him *tīrtha* and *prāśāda*, bade him go to his old monastery and resume his holy ministry to the growing congregation.

## CHAPTER XIX.

## GOVINDA'S CHARACTER.

Thus did Rāmānuja make his first holy pilgrimage, and was now settled again for another term in Śrirangam, imparting instruction to his followers on the holy science of Vedānta, both in *Gīṭā* and *Dvāitā*. Govinda, amongst them, drank deeply of this knowledge, and felt more and more attracted to Rāmānuja, in mind as well as in heart,—an attachment which was enhanced moreover by the fascination of Rāmānuja's glorious person and services rendered to him, with unflagging solicitude.

One day, Rāmānuja was conducting his ministry in a large assembly of the faithful, when the latter applauded Govinda for his estimable qualities, such as wisdom, devotion, self-abnegation, and devotedness to his spiritual preceptor Govinda, all the while, nodded assent. Rāmānuja observing, questioned, "How is it, Govinda, whilst it is seemly for others to heap plaudits on thee for thy perfections, thou dost not think it unseemly to accept them all? When others exalt us, we must not allow ourselves to be piqued, but profess humility. That would be more becoming indeed!" "Noble Sir," said Govinda, "pardon me if I explain to you why I nodded assent. Their praise means—'Dog, thou art,—gather seeds round thy neck, running hither and thither with pot-fulls of water to Kālahasti gods.' To this I must nod 'yes.' Their praise next means—'Divine thou art, that thou hast been redeemed from evil paths by our Saviour Rāmānuja—a very God on earth. Not like ourselves, but sunk as thou were in abysmal depths of rottenness, thou hast been lifted by Rāmānuja, and elevated to a state where thou hast good reason to exclaim—'Who is equal to me on earth? Who is equal to me in heaven?' Heart! good, good, glory thou hast won.' To this again I must nod 'yes.' For where their eulogy of me is but commendation of yourself and your glory on earth, I have no other alternative but to say 'yes.' On hearing this, Rāmānuja was amply enchanted with Govinda, and saying, 'good, good', drew him warmly to his bosom, and cried—

"Govinda! embrace me that I may become as enlightened as thou art. By this embrace, convey to me some of thy grace."

One day, Govinda was found standing at the door of a strumpet's, stupefied as it were. This looked strange to people who passed that way. News of it reached Rāmānuja. He went for him and asked "what made thee, brother, linger at the doors of infamy?" "Sire," he said, "the inmates, there whoever they were (I do not know), were singing your praises. This fascinated me so much that I was rooted to the spot, and so long as the music of your praise rang in my ears and lifted me into bliss, I could not stir from the spot." Rāmānuja made inquires whether they were really hymning his praises there (*kīrtitu*), and found it was true. "An angel on earth, thou art, Govinda! can such love as thine be found on this dust?" exclaimed Rāmānuja.

It is written that Govinda was an extraordinary soul, who had realized in his life what it was to lead a spiritual life. This was further displayed in a crowning event in his chapter of life. In Rāmānuja he realized God, ever-present. This presence made him ever feel that there was neither solitude nor darkness. God in Rāmānuja's form ever filled his outer eye as well as his mental vision. Hence he felt no solitude. Constant spiritual illumination and light of God filling all space made anything like night or darkness impossible for him. He never left Rāmānuja, and was ever engaged in listening to his expositions of the Divine Science. One day, while they were so engaged, Govinda's mother found occasion to enter the hall and within Rāmānuja's hearing informed her son that his wife had come of age. Govinda told her "If so, mother, let her come when there is solitude and darkness." But the mother waited for days and failing to find her son in 'solitude and in 'darkness,' complained to Rāmānuja about his waywardness and probable unwillingness to keep house with his wife, in the manner of the world. Rāmānuja thereon called on Govinda to abide by his mother's pleasure, and for one night at least, to remain with his wife. He bowed assent. And they made feast for the nuptial ceremony, and put Govinda

and wife together in a bed-room and went their way. Left alone with his wife, he began a discourse on theology and theosophy, and all the night through preached to her, God and His Glories, His Riches and His Wonders, His Blasful Presence in the heart and His Love to His Creatures, and so on himself, as he preached, revelling in the rapturous enjoyment of God. It was now morning, and relatives came to offer congratulations on the happy state of the couple. But the mother was aware, by overhearing, what had all night transpired within doors. "How is it, son," remonstrated the mother, "you seem to have been engaged otherwise with your wife. We could hear a regular religious sermon in a nuptial chamber!" "Mother," replied Govinda, "when God is in my heart, and is everywhere present, and ever watching me, how can I escape from Him, and feel lonely enough to be able to do any other work than that of His contemplation, and praise? With no solitude, no secret act is possible, with no darkness, no dark act is possible." This interview between son and mother was reported to Rāmānuja. "Govinda," he said, calling him to his side, "so, thou hast passed the greatest ordeal which can be put upon a pure soul like thee. Thou canst never be a worldling, seeing how thou hatest things of that sort. But, come, Śāstras require every man to belong to some one definite Order<sup>1</sup>, and as thou canst not be a householder, be of the Order of the Sannyāsin. This was exactly the wish of Govinda, and he begged that he be so ordained at once. It was done, and Rāmānuja conferred upon him his own name of *Embarnādaśr*. "That, noble Sire," said Govinda, "is too great an honor to put upon an humble creature like me. Bless me with a name which a shadow like me deserves. "Then", gracefully said Rāmānuja, "let it be *Nmādi*, the shadow (or abbreviated form) of *Embarnādaśr*."

<sup>1</sup> ब्रह्मचर्यव्रतमेतदेव [*Brahmacharya-vratameva*].

## CHAPTER XX

## DEVARĀT.

With Rāmānuja and his exemplary adherents, like Govinda, *et cetera* were to be passed in Divine Discourses, Divine Incidents, and Divine Occupations. In a previous chapter we left Yajña-murti, re-named A. P. Emberumānār,<sup>1</sup> after his conversion by Rāmānuja. To this sage some incidents happened about this time. A number of Srivaishnavas from a foreign land came on a visit to Srirangam and inquired of the street-goers where the monastery of Emberumānār was located. "Which Emberumānār?" they asked. The travellers feeling strange, asked whether there were two such sages for the Faith? "No, but here is A. P. Emberumānār bearing that name, a name after Rāmānuja. Hence our question. If you mean Rāmānuja himself, there is his monastery." So instructed, the travellers found their way to Rāmānuja. This conversation however accidentally reached the ears of A. P. Emberumānār, and it grieved him much to think that he should be confounded with Rāmānuja. "No such confusion," he thought, "would have arisen, had I not lived apart from Rāmānuja in a separate monastery, and that with his name, as if I were a rival here set up against him! My dwelling hence ought not to stand." So saying, he immediately pulled it to pieces, and hastening to Rāmānuja, clasped his feet, crying "Oh, my Holiness! was it not enough that this sinful soul of mine had in all the past eternity been estranged from Thy Holy Feet, and why should this alienation yet persist?" "Beloved," said Rāmānuja, "thou art talking in riddles, what is the matter with thee? Why art thou in such great affliction?" "Holy Sire," said he, after narrating to him the street-conversation of travellers" and how it affected his reputation, "no more can I live apart from Thee—a contingency this, which gives occasion for mistakes which are injurious to the well-being of my soul, and which jeopardize its eternal interests. My soul can only thrive by being made to live ever with thee and move about as the marks of thy sole

<sup>1</sup> Called *Devendrak-muni*, or *Devendri* in Sanskrit.



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and as thy shadow, and to be allowed to do thee every service." "Be it as thou wilt," said Rāmānuja, graciously lifting the prostrate form of Devarāt, for whom he composed a work called *Nityam*, or the method of worshipping God, and appointed him to the daily worship-duty in the *math*. From that day forth, he never left Rāmānuja's side, and drank deep all the precious truths of philosophy and religion which flowed like honey from Rāmānuja's holy lips. These sterling truths of the Vedānta, he embodied in two short treatises of his, composed in Tamil verse, called *Jñāna-sāra*, and *Pramīya-sāra*.<sup>1</sup> The substance of these works is (1) that to the true disciple, the Teacher himself is God visible, and (2) that services at his feet are the crowning joy of the soul.

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<sup>1</sup> These have been latterly commented on by Menavāla Mahā-muni-gal [A. C. 1370. No. 33 in the Hierarchic Table of our Lives of Āshvāra.]

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## CHAPTER XXI

## ŚRĪ-BHĀṢHYA AND OTHER WORKS.

Of the most tried fidelity and consummate learning, were now his four disciples, viz., Kūrēṣa, Dāsarathi, Devarāt and Embār (Govinda). There were countless others, of course, in his congregation. Daily classes on theological subjects were conducted. As they were reading St Nammāṣṭavar's *Tiruvāymozhi*, they came across the verse *-I-linḡai-tti-puḡḡattinḡai, Saṃasaram Śāḡḡyaram &c.* [IV-10-5] i.e. *Diverse faiths, as taught by the Liṅga-puḡḡar (= Śaiva), the Saṃasara (Jainas) and Śāḡḡya (Buddhas), &c.* And they discussed the defects of these systems as also those of the *advaita* dictum that liberation (*moksha*) is made sure on the mere knowledge of the meaning of such Vedic texts as *Tattva-mat, —Thou art That, i.e. Thou, Soul, art That, God, of the* system of those who maintain that not mere knowledge alone, but works as well as knowledge, combined, bring about deliverance (*moksha*). None of these systems, they argued, have hit the true spirit of the Vaidika-religion, i.e., Vedānta and that where they have hit the truth, it is partial. The final verdict of the Vedas is By love to God is emancipation (*moksha*) to be won. Love to God or God love is what is intended by such terms as *Vedana, Dhyaṇa, Upāsana* and *Bhakti*. Such love is fostered by good works and knowledge of God. Mere knowledge of God as learnt from Vedic texts is inefficacious, as also are good works done without a heart for God. Whereas knowledge and good works are calculated to lead to love, and love alone secures salvation (*moksha*), knowledge or good works, without love, jointly or separately, cannot directly lead thereto. Thus they discussed, and arrived at a decision that a true interpretation of the Vedānta, accordant with these views, should be systematically made and Rāmānuja accordingly sat down to prepare a standard work embodying an exhaustive refutation of *monism (advaita)* and similar theories and a consequent defence of *Viśiṣṭādvaita* or qualified monism.

Kūrēṣa was selected to help Rāmānuja in this grand task. Before he began, Rāmānuja enjoined upon Kūrēṣa that

if in the course of his reducing to writing his dictation, he should find anything not agreeing with his views, he should cease writing. Thus was Sri Rāṣaḥya, the stupendous standard work on Viśvādvaita philosophy of the Vedānta—or a commentary on Brahma Sūtras—began to be written. As the work was progressing, Rāmānuja dictated a passage where he gave the definition of soul (*ātma* = *jīva*) as *that which is conscious or that which has cognition alone as its distinguishing attribute*. Here Kārīa ceased writing, for to him such a definition, though valid, was as good as no definition, inasmuch as the most essential characteristic of the soul<sup>1</sup>, namely, its *allegiance or leighship to God* (*Sāhātra*), was a serious omission, and that such an all important omission was tantamount to defining the soul as identical with the body itself<sup>2</sup>, for no basis for true religion was raised by merely apprehending the soul as *that which is characterized by consciousness*, unless the soul is also the *sole property or possession of the Universal soul, God*. Defining soul as *that which has consciousness merely*, without any reference to its being essentially related to God, as quality is related to thing, or as property to a baam, or as mode to substance, as light to the sun, or scent to the flower, amounted to tacitly ignoring such essential relationship, and that without this relation to God first emphatically asserted and defended, anything said of the soul was ineffective, inasmuch as a soul without God is non-existent, in the same way as without the sun, light is non-existent. What made the soul really soul was its indiscerptible relation to God, otherwise it is non-existent. And where was the beauty or utility in loading such a separated soul, or soul orphaned of God, with any number of attributes such as consciousness and bliss? Such was the train of thought running in the mind of Kārīa and hence, when Rāmānuja defined the soul as *that which is conscious*, he stopped transcribing the same. But Rāmānuja was absorbed in his thoughts, and continued

<sup>1</sup> Similarly the identity of Universal Soul with Individual Soul, of the Advaitin, is as good as materialism.

<sup>2</sup> We leave our readers to peruse the Chapter on soul, or *Chit-prakāśa* in the *Tattva-Prasāda* by Yogi S. Pāṇḍurāyaṇa.

dictating further but Kūrēsa had come to a full stop. This incensed Rāmānuja, who cried "Sir if you mean to write the commentary on the *Vyasa Sūtras* (*Brahm Sūtras*), you may do so," and kicked him and ceased dictating. But Kūrēsa was neither taken aback nor ruffled but remained unperturbably cool and collected. But friends vexed him with the question "How dost thou view this affront?" "Comrades," he replied, "I have no view other than that I am my master's property (chattel), which he is at liberty to use or treat in any manner he thinks fit." Rāmānuja, by this time, reflected over the whole position in his retreat, and it flashed on him that his omission to define the soul as *that which is a belonging of God*, was a grave mistake inasmuch as this essentiality of soul was the very foundation of his theology. If that were missed, all the superstructure was built on air. Kūrēsa did well in ceasing to write to Rāmānuja's dictation, but it was at variance with the right view of the question which Kūrēsa knew, being a perfect savant as he was. Also Kūrēsa's own behaviour after the harsh treatment was an actual illustration of the view he so rightly entertained. These thoughts converted Rāmānuja's rage into repentance; and calling Kūrēsa at once lovingly to his side, "Son, you are right," said he apologetically, "now pray write down the true nature of the soul as *that which is God's*, and let us proceed with the rest of our work."

In this manner did Rāmānuja compose the standard works : *Śrī-Bhāṣya*, *Vedānta-Dīpa*, *Vedānta Sāra*, *Vedārtha Saṅgraha*, and *Bhagavad-Gītā-Bhāṣya*. And thus did he fulfil one of the wishes of Yāmunaśhārya.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid p. 56.

## CHAPTER XXII

## RĀMĀNUJA'S TRAVELS.

The worthies of Rāmānuja's congregation, who had so long listened to his teachings and who had the good fortune as well to see all the tenets of his faith perpetuated in treatises, rose one day and reverently bowing to Rāmānuja said—"Holy Master, your system is now perfect, and it must be made known to the world at large. The ways to God are diverse, and confusing. Let the true way, you have discovered to us, be made accessible to all. Pray then undertake a tour of ministry and as a tour, it shall have the added object of visiting Holy Shrines." "So be it," said Rāmānuja, and representing his intention to Lord Ranga, he obtained his permission. With his elect, he left Srirangam, and visited Tiru-k-kudandai (Kumbhakonam) and other places in the Chōla-maṇḍalam, and won victories there by theological disputations. Thence he bent his steps to Tiruvāli-Tirunagari, the nativity of St. Parakāla or Tirumanga-Āshvār.<sup>1</sup> Here an interesting incident happened. Rāmānuja was devoutly making his round of several holy shrines encompassing the Central Shrine Tirunagari, when he met a Chaudāla woman approaching. Rāmānuja, in order to avoid pollution by her proximity, commanded her to hold off, so that he might pass on. But she without moving away addressed Rāmānuja and said—"Sire, which side shall I move? Here before me stands thy holy self, a Brāhman whom I cannot approach lest I pollute thee by my nearness. Behind me is the Holy Shrine Nil nilāmttam (= Tiru-k-kappuram), to my right are the Tirumanañ-kollai (where St. Tirumanga laid the Lord) and Tiruv-areṇi (the Pipal tree used by the St. as his watch tower), and to my left is Lord Tiruvāli-Manavālan. There is thus purity all about me here, which side then can my impurity turn?" Rāmānuja was struck dumb at this unexpected answer from an unexpected quarter. "Forgive me, madam," he said, "nor did I divine such spirituality in a low-caste woman as thou art. But for all that thou art holier than myself. So saying he administered

<sup>1</sup> Read over "Holy Lives of the Saints."

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to her the holy Vaishnava sacraments, and allotted her a place in the Shrine, where her image is to this day seen and revered by all the visitors. Thence he turned to the south, going to Tirumā-irai-jōlai (10 miles north of Madura), and other Shrines, in the Pāndya-mandala and held disputations there with the learned on philosophy and won laurels. Thence he travelled to Tira-p-pullāni (Darbhāṣayanam near Rāmnād), Sētu (or Rāmā's Bridge), and returned to Tira-nagari, the birth-place of St. Nammāzhvār,<sup>1</sup> before whom he reverently repeated the Kanninnu-Sira-t-tāmbu of St. Madhura-Kavigal.<sup>2</sup> The Saint was delighted with Rāmānuja's devotion and blessed him with *śrīṅga*, *prasāda*, and other honors. And Rāmānuja, dedicating the verse -

सुखमस्यमहासुखं देवदत्तमस्यमहासुखं देवदेवस्यमहासुखं ।

विभुसुखमनांकारं धृष्टं करोमि स्वस्वमुपमनोहं बद्धहस्तमवकम् ॥

took leave of the Saint after visiting the Holy Tamarind Tree under which he is enshrined, and Lord Ādinātha resident there. The various Shrines in the vicinity were all visited, engaging in polemic controversies wherever he went and overthrowing his opponents.<sup>3</sup> Duly he reached Tira-k-kurungudi (Kuranga-nagari about 20 miles south of Tinnervelly), and visited the Lord Nambi. A voice came from him thus - "Rāmānuja, we have often incarnated on earth, as Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, and so on in order to save mankind, but we have never been able to persuade people to Our ways as thou hast done. How dost thou do it?" "Almighty," said Rāmānuja, "if thou wilt ask me in the way that a disciple or a pupil is required to ask his teacher or tutor, I will answer thee." Nambi understood Rāmānuja, and commanded a throne being brought and begged Rāmānuja to

1. \* Read the Lives of these Saints in our Lives of *Āṣṭhīra*.

2. Another version has it: Rāmānuja went from here to Tira-t-tanantapuram (Trivendram) first. And here he wished to introduce the Pā-haritra mode of worship, but the Nambodai Brāhmins, the priests of the Temple, objected. Rāmānuja perceiving the Lord Ādinātha pedanābha, along with His old priests, transported Rāmā-

nuja when he was asleep to a rock (called *Paradidam-ēla*) on an islet in the Sittouu river, a mile from Kurunga Nagar. Finding himself alone he called for a disciple of his by name Nambi. But Lord Nambi appeared in the guise of this disciple, served him and led him to the Temple, where however He vanishing out of sight to Rāmānuja's great astonishment.

he seated there and from that position answer the question Rāmānuja mentally placed his Āchārya, Mahāpūjya, on the throne and taking his stand before it, whispered into Lord Nambi's right ear thus: -

"Of all the mantras, the *Mantra-ratna*, and the *Druga* are great. Easily do they carry one to the Supreme State. These teach that the way of Resignation or Surrender to God variously called *nyāsa*, *prapatti*, *saravālyati*, is the most beneficial to man and compasses for him every good."

"Thus, Great God," said Rāmānuja, "by Thy own best instruments of salvation, have I prevailed upon the hearts of men." Lord Nambi was mightily pleased with this declaration, and proclaimed that He was henceforth *Rāmānujana*, *malayan*.<sup>2</sup> Rāmānuja gave Nambi the Holy Name of Srīvaishṇava Nambi and rendering his apologies<sup>3</sup> for what had occurred, left Kurunga-nagara.

From here Rāmānuja entered into the Malayālam (Malabār) country, visiting the Shrines Tiruvān-parīśāram, Tiruvāṭṭar, and others and paid homage to Lord Ananta padma-nābha in Tiruvananantapuram (Trivendram), through the three doors of this Sanctum, and left the place after overcoming opponents and establishing a Rāmānuja-Māth there with the help of the then king, who became a disciple of his. He proceeded north along the western sea-coast of the Peninsula to such Holy Shrines as Mathara (Māṭra), Nanda-vraja, Govardhana, Brindāvana, and others and Śālagrāma, Muṣṭinātha-Kṣhetra,

सर्वेषामेवमन्त्राणां मन्त्ररत्नमुपावहम् ।  
सकृत्स्मरकयात्मेन ददाति परमं परम् ॥  
मन्त्ररत्नं द्रव्यं नाम प्रपन्नैरस्मिन् प्रपत्ति ।  
जहमीनारायणादिति हितं सर्वफलप्रदम् ॥ [Māṭra-vāṭṭa].

On *Mantra-ratna* and *Druga*, consult Pp. xxx. introd. to our *Lines of Āchāryas*.

<sup>2</sup> Means: "We who have Rāmānuja as Our own."

<sup>3</sup> This is embodied in the verse

उपकारापदेशेन कृतानुहरहर्षया ।  
अपचारादिमानुसर्वान् क्षमस्वपुरुषोत्तम ॥

Gandaki-river; ("Sālagrama Hill" is stated in another work. It must be a part of the Himālayas, Vaikundam, Dvāraka, and Ayodhya, Dadarik-āramas), Naimiśāranya and Pushkara, and thence on to Bhāṭṭa-maudapa, (this is probably Bhāṭṭa-mandala near Lahore), and Kāshmir, the seat of Sarasvatī, the Goddess of Learning, was now reached. Sarasvatī requested Rāmānuja to expound the meaning of the Vedic passage तस्य यजः कया जम् पुनर्हरीक, इमां देवी<sup>1</sup> Rāmānuja did so at great length and embodied it in the verse -

कयिस्त्वहित्य कयिहात्-कार्यं देविकमिह नमस्कीर्त्तयामास यजः कयिभुजाऽस्तं करिदहत ।  
 मनीष कया कयिदेविकमतेऽहं तस्मात्ते सुपुत्रं श्रीमन्महर्षिभिरवतः सुदुपपादः<sup>2</sup>

On hearing this, Sarasvatī said Rāmānuja's Sankara had ere this unhappily interpreted this as "monkey's puerilities"<sup>3</sup> and I was much grieved at his perverse understanding and warped heart. Thou hast now wiped my tears." So saying, she placed Rāmānuja's Sri-Bhāṣhya<sup>4</sup> on her head, drew Rāmānuja to her breast, and gave him the title Bhāṣhya-kṛta and handed him the Image of Haya-grīva for worship.

The pandits of the place, on seeing these special favors of Sarasvatī bestowed on Rāmānuja grew envious, and called upon him for a disputation. This was granted and in the end they were routed. The king of Kāshmir silently watched these events, and when he found the pandits discomfited, he looked upon Rāmānuja as no ordinary mortal and permitted himself to be enlisted into his fold. The king asked Rāmānuja to explain the Traditions on which he based his Viśishtādvaita interpretation of the Brahma-Sūtras. Rāmānuja said that the old Traditions were the Bodhāyāna-Vṛtti, and the glosses by Tanka, Guhadava, Kaparṭi, Bhāruḥi, and others. The king went with him and the pandits into his library, and had a search

<sup>1</sup> *Cūṇḍoppan* Cp. 1-8, 7. The readers are referred to p. 32 where the controversy with Yādeva is fully explained.

<sup>2</sup> Sun is called Kapa, because he drinks (*piṇāti*) water (*kaṃ*). Bruti itself explains Kapa to mean sun's rays - "Kapaḥ gubhoḥ t-ānām," *kapaḥ*-sun's then that which, by rays, is blown (*asaṃ* *lōpana* = to expand), and that is the hām. A

ful-blown beautiful lotus is thus a simile for the beautiful eyes of God.

<sup>3</sup> Read Sankara-bhāṣhya on the Ch Up here. His interpretation is a reproach on his reputation as a Vedic scholar.

<sup>4</sup> Rāmānuja's Bhāṣhya on Brahma-sūtras was so named, i.e., Sri-Bhāṣhya.



made for such works. They were found, and on a perusal it was found that Rāmānuja's exposition was correct. Rāmānuja and Kīrītā took this opportunity of studying the Bodhāyana-Vṛitti better, as the Pandits would not allow the work to be taken away by him. Rāmānuja was anxious to secure the work, but objections to his taking the book away were insurmountable. He felt grieved, but Kīrītā assured him that he had retained the cardinal passages in his memory, and could reproduce the same whenever wanted. This allayed Rāmānuja's anxiety, and he allowed the Vṛitti, though very reluctantly, to be restored to the library, at the King's request, as the latter knew his Pandits would otherwise give trouble and would not hesitate even to kill Rāmānuja.<sup>1</sup> And yet the Pandits resented all this, as their prestige suffered so much, but being powerless to openly harm Rāmānuja, as the king was already on his side, they entered into a dark conspiracy to kill Rāmānuja by black magic. This

<sup>1</sup> The following extracts from Max Müller's *Theosophy or Psychological Religion* are interesting to the student of philosophy: "Rāmānuja does not represent himself as stating a new theory of the Vedānta, but he appeals to Bodhāyana, the author of a Vṛitti or explanation of the Bhāṣya sūtras as his authority, may be refers to previous commentaries or Vṛitti Līkās on Bodhāyana as likewise supporting his opinions. It has been supposed that one of these, Dravida, the author of a Pīṇamā-tīkāya or a Commentary on Bodhāyana, is the same as the Dravida whose Bhāṣya on the Chhāndogya-Upanishad is several times referred to by Śaṅkara in his commentary on that Upanishad, and whose opinions on the Vedānta Sūtras are sometimes supported by Śaṅkara (See Thebaud S.B.E. XXXIV, p. 221)." [P. 100.]

"We have thirdly the commentaries of Śaṅkara, Bodhāyana, Rāmānuja, and many others. These commentaries, however, are not mere commentaries in our sense of the word, they are really philoso-

phical treatises, each defending an independent view of the Sūtras, and indirectly of the Upanishads." [P. 101.]

"I have generally followed the guidance of Śaṅkara, as he seems to me to carry the Vedānta doctrine to the highest point, but I feel bound to say that Professor Thebaud has proved that Rāmānuja is on many points the more faithful interpreter of the Vedānta Sūtras." "Nor was Rāmānuja a mere dissentient from Śaṅkara. He claimed for his interpretation of the Vedānta the authority of philosophers more ancient even than Śaṅkara, and, of course, the authority of the Vedānta Sūtras themselves, if only rightly understood. Rāmānuja's followers do not possess now so far as I know manuscripts of any of these more ancient commentaries, but there is no reason to doubt that Bodhāyana and other philosophers to whom Rāmānuja appeals were real characters and in their time influential teachers of the Vedānta." [P. 113.]

came to his knowledge, but spiritual giant as he was he remained undaunted, and simply watched how events would develop themselves. They resorted to black magic, but instead of their plans succeeding, it had a contrary effect, for they were all suddenly seized with madness, and began to rave and play such antics, as to be ridiculed by all. The king saw this, and pitying the poor wretches, approached Rāmānuja, and falling at his feet, implored him to relieve them, as he could not look on their sufferings. Rāmānuja, by a simple act of his will, cured them, and the king made them members of the Faith, and escorting Rāmānuja with all his staff, a few stages on his return journey, took leave and joined his capital.

Rāmānuja took the road towards Vārāṇasī (Benares), which he reached in due time, and basking in the Holy Gaṅgā (Ganges), and visiting the Lord of Kāṇḍamunṇu Kad nagar<sup>1</sup> proceeded south to Pāruṣhottama-Kṣētrā (Jagannātha or Pūri, on the east-coast of the Indian Peninsula). Here also were disputations held on philosophy and religion, Rāmānuja coming off victorious, and a Rāmānuja-Math also was established. Here, on his attempt to introduce the worship, as laid down in the Pāñcharātra, into the Temple there, the priests objected, but as Rāmānuja still resolved to reform the practices prevalent there which were not cleaily and to his liking, Lord Jagannātha is said to have appeared to him in his dream and prevailed upon him not to attempt the reforms, as his priests were much attached to Him with their old ways of worship, which therefore he might not disturb. And when Rāmānuja awoke, he found to his surprise he had been transported all the way to Sri-Kūrma. Here he paid homage to the Lord in the Kūrma-form and journeyed on to Simhagiri (Aḥobila), and other shrines. Winning his way throughout by poetical triumphs he finally arrived at Tirupati. Here a Saiva-Vaiṣṇava controversy of a curious character had been waging.

St. Pēyāshvār, who lived centuries before Rāmānuja, had sung of the Lord of Tirupati, as wearing both the Saiva emblems, such as matted locks and serpent girdle, and the

<sup>1</sup> Deva-*prayaṅ* on the way from Haridvār to Badarikāśh.

Vaishnava ones, such as the Diadem and the golden girdle, and the Saint expressed his wonderment at Vishnu having chosen to appear to him in this dual character of Hari Hara, or Vishnu-Siva<sup>1</sup>. On the authority of this verse, in all probability, the Saivas made an attempt to claim Tirupati as their own exclusive Saiva Shrine; but Rāmānuja contended it was Vaishnava, but the Saivas would not give in. Rāmānuja proposed that both Saiva and Vaishnava emblems, such as *Trisula* and *Damaruka*, and *Chakra* and *Sankha*, be placed in front of Venkatesa's Image in the *sacrum sanctorum*, and the doors be closed and securely locked, after carefully examining the chamber that no one lay hidden there, and the character of the Deity might be determined by the choice of the emblems made by Him. This test was gladly agreed to by all. The emblems were accordingly prepared and placed before the Image. Next day, both the parties came in a body with eager expectations of their own opinion being realized. But when the doors were thrown open in full day light and in the presence of the whole assembly, it was found that the Lord had assumed the Vaishnava-emblems, with the Saiva emblems lying unused on the floor. Rāmānuja's joy knew no bounds. He sang and danced, eyes streaming with tears of delight at the miraculous event and the Beatific Vision presented to his view. The Saivas were thus ousted<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Read verse 63 of 3rd Tiruvandādi. "Text-Sachiyam, &c." Nārāyaṇa includes Siva. In Nārāyaṇa's (or Yānu's) body a piece is assigned to Siva in the same manner as his navel is assigned to the four faced Brahṇā, and his bosom to Sri or Lakshmi (Logos). Read Bhagavad-Gītā xi. 15. *Paśyanta*, &c., and numerous other authorities. So then this dual appearance proved Vishnu, not Siva exclusively, as Saivas thought.

<sup>2</sup> A piece of Epigraphic Information is here annexed for the use of our readers. -

"We have received this year a very interesting report from the Epigra-

phist to Government [1903-1904 A.C.]

The Epigraphist has meanwhile inferred from a set of very dubious conclusions as to the raised temple and Yurchohānūr, that Tirupati temple was perhaps originally Saiva; a character. From the fact that the temple is mentioned in the inscriptions as *Hangoyil* and that the same word is used in the Saiva *Periyappendinam* and another inscriptions as the name of a temple which must certainly have been Saiva and that another inscription says that the temple now in ruins was built as an accompaniment to the shrine at Tirupati, he first inferred that the Yurchohānūr temple



Rāmdāsa made the circuit of the Shrine,<sup>1</sup> and descending the Holy Mount, did homage to the Īshvāra enshrined at its base, and thence proceeding to Kāñchi and other Shrines such as Sri-perambūdūr (his birth-place), Tiruvallūkeṇi (Triplicane) and Tiru nīr-malai, and thence crossing over to Madhurānātham and the Holy Vakula-tree there, under which his Guru Mahāpūrṇa gave him the first initiation, and thence on to Tiru-vayandrapuram (Tiru-vendi-puram near Cuddalore), where he tendered his salutations to Lord Deva-nāyaka, and vanquished disputants wherever met, and thence on to Vīra-nārāyaṇapuram, the Holy Place of sage Nātha-muni; [the place where he sat for Yoga (meditation)] and Lord Maṇṇa-nāṭuero,

**Foot note on page 144 (continued).**

looks and high diadem, with the beautiful Maṣka and āraṇḍa and with a serpent and a golden waistcord entwined (round his waist)."

Therefore it is evident that the God of Tirumalai was worshipped as Viṣṇu in the days of the early Vaishnavite Saint Pōy Āṣvār.

Cannarayana's allusion to the Vaishnavite salutes of the deity in the class on Tamil poe in "Silappadikāram" 1st century A.C., where he author describes him the god as "standing on the top of Vēḷḷadāṁ, has a line cloud with the arch and discus (which are compared to the sun and moon)" (Kāṇḍakāy Kīdāi, ll. 41-51)

"M. N.", in his reply to Mr. Venkayya's rejoinder in the *Hiada*, has avowed that in the days of the Dharmam Hoppers the temple might not have been Śhiva, and that Rājarija the great Chōla King, himself a Śhiva, has made grants to the Vukasa on the hill.

In the face of these explicit statements in early Tamil literature it is really incredible how Tirumala could be doubted to have perhaps been Śhiva. Let us hope that in the examination of the inscriptions *pedāra*, more light will be thrown on this rather important question. [A Vatanbata in Madras Mail, 26th December 1904.]

<sup>1</sup> There is a legend related here. There was a person by name Tīrappikāṁ Chāṇṇayya. He was a favourite of God Śrī-viṣṇu of this Śhrī or so much so that when he sang hymns to Him, He kept time by dancing to it. Rāmdāsa came to know this, and asked the devotees to kindly ascertain from his God whether he (Rāmdāsa) may hope for Moksha (Salvation). Chāṇṇayya, when he next sang and the God danced to him, reverently submitted to him Śrī Rāmdāsa's petition. God answered: "Certainly he shall be saved." "And I, Lord?"

asked Chāṇṇayya. "No" was the answer. "But have I not sung to Thee, Lord, all these days?" protested Chāṇṇayya. "But have I not danced to thee, son, as often as thou sangest?" retorted He. "Then I am undone, O Lord! Pray show me the way of salvation. By no means can I forget that state." The Lord answered: "Go to that Śanyasi our Rāmdāsa, talk at His Holy Feet and win it. He is fit to give Moksha to whomsoever he will." This story illustrates that salvation is won, not by bargain, but by grace.

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returned to his head-quarters, Srirangam. He proceeded to the Temple to visit Lord Ranga, announcing his arrival, and after the usual ceremonies, Ranga's voice came inquiring: "Art thou satisfied?". Rāmānuja answered: "Holy Lord, how can I be otherwise, when thy Blessed Vision is ever reflected in my mental mirror wherever I may be. I have but fulfilled Thy holy errand on earth." Ranga commanded *Artha* and *prasāda* to be given him. Rāmānuja thence bent his steps to his own monastery, his soul steeped in peace and bliss.

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## CHAPTER XXIII.

THE BIRTH OF VYĀSA-BHATTA AND  
PARĀSARA-BHATTA.

Thus had our Bhāshya-kāra<sup>1</sup> accomplished his second pilgrimage through Bharata-khaṇḍa. Those were days of religious rejuvenescence in India brought about by the inspired personality of our Rāmānuja. For his influence spread from house to house, village to village and throughout Bharata-land, and his spirit fanned the fire of religion, smouldering in human hearts.

Kūrṣa was the very soul and shadow of Rāmānuja. In erudition he was a savant, in conduct, he was a paragon of excellence. Never a day was he found remiss in all the duties of the day, classed as *Atkṛtameva*, *Upādāna*, *Iyā*, *Sādādyā* and *Yoga*.<sup>2</sup>

We have already told our readers that Kūrṣa lived by alms; because he had given away his all at Kūra and come to Srīrangam to live with Rāmānuja.<sup>3</sup> One day, it rained all the morning till it was past the *Bangara* or the *Upādāna* time, which is set apart for excursions for collecting alms. Kūrṣa's strict rule it was, to beg each day's requirement at the houses of virtuous folk, and never to store a second day's provisions in his house. Prevented then by the rainy day from stirring out, Kūrṣa and his pious wife Āṇḍāmma fasted, after taking the usual bath, performing the morning *sandhyā* and other ceremonies and offering to his Chapel God, a fruit and some water,<sup>4</sup> which latter, sipped, being sacramental. It was now evening, and Kūrṣa, performing the evening *sandhyā*, never bestowed a thought for his hungry stomach, but devoutly went through a reading of the *Tira-vāy mōḷi* (*Prabandha*) considering this as his *manna*, and thus went to sleep. But the wife

<sup>1</sup> See page 140 for Rāmānuja winning this name.

<sup>2</sup> A work recently published in Madras (1904) by D. T. Eṛimvāśa-chārya, called *Pañcha-tāra-pratīka* gives full details of these five-fold day-occupations.

<sup>3</sup> See Chapter XIII.

<sup>4</sup> See Bhagavad-Gītā. IX, 28.

was awake and was sore grieved at heart that her god like husband was fasting. As she sat, she heard the temple drums and bugles announcing that Lord Ranga was having his night-offering of food, called the *Periya-combaram*. This disturbed her musings, and she gave vent to her feelings thus — “Ranga, when thy *bhakta* is fasting, how canst thou revel thus in feasting?” A cry of distress like this was of course heard by the Lord, and the cry, it is said, pierced his ears like arrows.

Uttamanambi, a temple-functionary, was asleep on a pal, and he dreamt a dream in which Ranga appeared to him and commanded him thus — “Nambi, my *bhakta* Kūrēṣa is fasting, rise, go to my Temple, and carry on thy head the holy *Araṇas*-food which has just been offered me, in right procession style from the Temple to his house. Uttama-Nambi awoke, startled, and hastening to the Temple, did as commanded. As the music and other din of the procession reached Kūrēṣa's doors, he was disturbed from his sleep, and awoke, wondering what was happening at that hour of the night, met the processionists and inquired of them what brought them there. Uttama-Nambi said, “Sire, Lord Ranga bid me carry you His holy food. Pray accept.” Kūrēṣa received the same devoutly but he would not have the whole quantity. He said to the messengers — “Holy sires, I should not deprive the Lord of His income by disposing of this food as usual. But I cannot refuse it altogether, as it has been so graciously sent by Him. I should but take two morsels, one for myself, and the other for my wife. Lord Ranga has so fully made me His own that I do not stand in need of anything on earth. I thank you, sires, please retire with the remaining food to the Temple.” After thus dismissing the Temple servants, Kūrēṣa sat down and asked his wife whether she thought of any thing in particular when he was asleep. She confessed to him she did so. She said she envied Ranga enjoying his last sumptuous course of food for the day, while His *bhakta* was hungry. “Good lady,” said Kūrēṣa petulantly, “you should not have been thus guilty. Do not this again.” And they both devoutly partook each, one of the two morsels that had been retained, and Kūrēṣa



went to bed again, somewhat out of humour with his wife. But he had a dream. Lord Ranga appearing spoke to him. "My beloved, the two morsels you have eaten, will be the seed for raising two precious sons in your family. They shall be considered as my own sons. As sons, I myself choose to appear in furtherance of my own future purpose, in the same manner as I chose to appear as Rāma, the son of Dasaratha, and Kṛiṣṇa the son of Vasudēva." The dream was over. Kāreṣa awoke, and related it to his wife and others, and attended to his duties, quietly expecting events to develop in their own good time.

Some time went by. In due course, two sons were born to Kūrēsa as predicted by Lord Ranga. The ten days of puerperal *sūta*ka were over, but Kāreṣa never concerned himself about the name-giving and other sacramental rituals, which the Vedas require to be administered to new-born infants. His idea was that to his Rāmānuja's spiritual family the children belonged, and it was for Rāmānuja therefore to do the needful. Rāmānuja, however, now made his appearance, accompanied by Govinda, and commanded him to bring the little ones to him. Govinda sped in all earnestness to Āṇḍalamma, and lovingly hugging the two gems of babies, ran to Rāmānuja, muttering all the way the Holy Dvaya-Mantra as a protective shield for the babies against evil influences, and lovingly lifted them up to Rāmānuja. Rāmānuja graciously scanned them with his love-mountain eyes, and observing the splendid appearance and glorious looks of the infants, blessed them heartily and addressing Govinda, said: "Brother, what didst thou? The smell of the Dvaya-Mantra comes to me from the babies." "Sure, yes," replied Govinda, "as I was conveying the precious charges to you, I shielded them with the power of that Mantra." "Then brother," commanded Rāmānuja, "as thou hast constituted thyself the guardian of the bodies of these gems, thou shalt be the guardian as well of their souls. And these two infants are no other than the two sentences of the Dvaya itself, made manifest in their persons thus." So saying he stroked the infants with his hands, adorning them with the *Pañcā-āyudha* ornament, and in due time made Govinda administer the *Pañcā-*

*sawādā*, naming the infants Parāṣara Bhaṭṭārya,<sup>1</sup> and Vyāsa-Bhaṭṭārya,<sup>2</sup> thus fulfilling another of the three wishes of his Great Guru, Yāmunāchārya.<sup>3</sup> Thus were two great luminaries for the Faith ushered into the world—in the wake of Rāmānuja.

Uttama-Nambī, in a work called *Lakṣmī-Kāvya*, composed by him, sings of them thus :—

पुनीकृतोरङ्गपुरंधरेषु परमहंसकृतसप्तदीपः ।  
 गोविन्दशिष्यस्तुत्यस्तुनार्यमन्त्रेरं प्रतिपन्नर्द्धितोयम् ॥  
 कुरेह्यनन्दनन्दे न्यासकुरेह्यनन्देनम् ।  
 धनोपधनुर्वैशाले नान्दधेयपरेश्वरम् ॥

Another event also occurred about this time enabling Rāmānuja to fulfil the remaining wish of his Great Guru Yāmuna: to name some fit person by the name of Parāṅkusa or Nammāshvār in perpetuation of the memory of the Saint of that name.

The reader will recollect the redemption of Govinda by Śrīśaila Pīrṇa of Tirupati, described in a previous chapter. When Govinda joined the Vaishṇava-band, he felt so blessed in his regenerate life that he would not allow his newly awakened delight to rest in himself alone. So, he sought out his own brother by name Sīry-Govinda-p-peremāl, and explained to him the beauties of the New Faith. He brought him to Pīrṇa, who graciously accepted him as his disciple. Govinda and G Perumāl had thus become spiritual associates as well, and had both come to live with Rāmānuja at Śrīraṅgam.

The event which came about was that G Perumāl had a son born to him, and this, to Rāmānuja, was another valuable acquisition to his Faith. So he hurried to Perumāl's place, and blessing the child, named him Parāṅkusa<sup>4</sup>-Nambī. This

<sup>1</sup> See No. 32, in the Hierarchy Table of our *Lives of Achāryas*.

<sup>2</sup> Śrī-Māna-pṛajñai is another name.

<sup>3</sup> See page 54.

<sup>4</sup> Parāṅkusa=St. Nammāshvār

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fulfilment of Yāmunā's third wish<sup>1</sup> was recorded by Uttama-Nambī in his *Lakṣṇa Kāvya*, thus —

गविन्दराजात्मयजोमनीषी पराङ्मुखोपायुनवैयनस्यम् ।

अपचकार प्रसंगतुमीयं विराजतेदृढमहिमदीपम् ॥

We shall close this chapter by asking our readers to remember the "three-finger-miracle" of Yāmunā, related in chapter IX and that the three fulfilments thereof by Rāmānuja, on whom had devolved that sacred duty, were, in order, the composition of *Sri-Bhāṣya*, the Commentary on the *Brahma-Sūtras*, the naming of two children in memory of Parāśara and Vyāsa, and a third child, in memory of St. Nannāśhvār.

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<sup>1</sup> See page 56.

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## CHAPTER XXIV.

## BHATTĀRYA.

Our readers, in this Chapter, will be treated to the interesting traits which the new luminary Paṭṭara Bhattārya, or simply Bhattārya, displayed as he grew.

Lord Ranga commanded the two little brothers to be conveyed to His Fans, and adopting them, as fashion required, as his own sons, had cradles swung there in His own chamber, called the *Maṇḍitāṇḍa* and Himself and His Consort Lakṣmī taking care of them in every way. The Lord had willed that before He accepted the courses of daily food offered to him, the children should be first served; nay, that they should help *themselves* to what dishes they pleased by allowing them to toddle about to the place where the food in several dishes was spread before Him.

One day the children, as usual, stole about at pleasure and helped themselves to the viands that had been placed before Ranga that day as the special service of the Rāja who then ruled. The priests were offended that day at the conduct of the children, and handling them somewhat roughly, conveyed them outside the Temple premises. That night the Rāja had a dream. The Lord appearing to him, declared. "I had just tasted your food-service. When the fools of my officiating priests interfered with my children, the Bhattars, preventing them from having their full share, and treated them roughly, I could not partake of thy food any more. I am this day not pleased with thee." The Rāja awoke and making inquiries, found his dream to be correct, and strictly decreed that services should thenceforward be conducted in the manner which best pleased the Lord.

Bhattārya was now a boy of five years, and showed signs of extraordinary intelligence for his age. His father Kārṣṇa was one day reciting the Decad of St. Nammāshvār, beginning with *Nāṇumdr̥k-aḍimai* (vii. 10. 1). In this Decad, the greatness of God's Saints is described. In the third verse, the

description runs thus *Śrīn-mā-maṇḍar* "i.e. *God's Saints are small-great*. The boy, who was attentively listening to the recitation, stopped the father at this place, with the eager query "Father, how can a thing be both *small* and *great* at one and the same time, for 'thou saidest *small-great*' ? My dearest, what an unexpected question from a stripling like thee ! But it would be a hard task on my part to convince thee of the justness and beauty of the apparently contradictory terms, by resorting to learned discourses on it, based on Śāstras. But I shall try by other easier means to make thee understand this puzzling passage of our Holy Saint. Dost thou see our Sages of Srirangam, Sīry-acchān, A. P. Embaramānār and others like them ? See, they are *small* in stature, but very *great* in knowledge and wisdom. So, dost thou now see how contradictory things like *small* and *great* can yet be harmoniously combined in one and the same thing ?" The young questioner was satisfied.

The boy was a budding genius, as became evident from another incident which happened at about this time. There was a learned man by name Sarvajña-bhaṭṭa, who was proud of his erudition, and had successfully carried on a warfare of polemics in Vārāṇasī and other places, and who had now arrived at Srirangam. To show to all how great a man he was, he installed himself in a sedan chair and paraded himself in the streets, with his followers before and behind, proclaiming his fame and titles, and announcing that he was the *Sarvajña-bhaṭṭa*, meaning *one who is all knowing*. Bhaṭṭar, the boy, was at this time playing with the dust in the street. He heard the name *Sarvajña* ringing in his ears, and he got irate at it. "What !" exclaimed he "while there are such all-knowing giants amongst us, as Rāṇānjan, Kūrēṣa, Dāsarathi, Dēvarāt and others, who dare call himself by the proud name *Sarvajña*, all-knowing ?" So saying he took a handful of dust in his hand, and running up to the sedan, in which the Pandit was seated, spoke mockingly at him thus — "Halloo, man, stop, and answer me this before you step farther. If you are all-knowing, as you call yourself, tell me what quantity of dust I have in my hand." This sudden and curious interrogation, by a mere boy,

checked the Pandit, and he was so confounded and confused that he could not compass a ready answer. "I see," cried the boy, "you are dumfounded by the paltry question of a boy. Could you not say 'you have a handful of dust?' you don't deserve the title *all knowing*." So saying, the impertinent little boy turned to Sarvajña's attendants and asked them never more to exhibit their poor master pompously in the streets, and exhorted them in the sweet words of fire, to drop the insignia they were carrying, and cease blowing the trumpets." The surprise of the Pandit at this strange behaviour and talk of a mere urchin, now turned into wonder and admiration. He inquired of the by-standers whose son was this prodigy? They said — 'Sure, he is the son of Kārēsa, the soul of our Guru Rāmānuja, the Pontiff of our Faith.' Sarvajña exclaiming, "The fledgling surely flies, not creeps," lovingly lifted the little marvel into his sedan, and moved on till the procession approached the house of Kārēsa. Ponnāyachiyār or Kanakāmba, the good wife of Dhanurdāsa,<sup>1</sup> was standing at the door watching. Espying the boy Bhattārya seated in the sedan with a strange person, she ran up, and drawing him from the vehicle, covered him with her garment, and rushed with him into the house, muttering the *Dravya-Mantra*, and delivering the precious load unto the arms of its mother Āndāhamma, chided her for having allowed her gem to stray out thus into the streets and expose himself to evil eyes,<sup>2</sup> and anxiously sprinkled him with Rāmānuja's Śrī padma water,<sup>3</sup> to ward off evil influences which might have injured the boy. She also vaguely feared, lest such a prodigy as her boy would be allowed to live long on earth!!

Bhattārya grew older. About eight he was now, and the holy thread ceremony *Upanayana*, was duly made, and he was sent to school to learn the Vedas and other subjects. The boy attended the first day and learnt some Veda. The second day, when he went to school, he found the teacher repeating the same lessons as those of the previous day to the boys. He therefore left the school and went to play. His parents finding

<sup>1</sup> Read next chapter.

<sup>2</sup> Holy water washed off the feet of Rāmānuja, water thus consecrated is considered an antidote to every kind of evil, material or spiritual.

him thus employed, questioned him as to why he did not attend school. "I did attend, father," said he, "but they were reading the same lessons again, and so I left it." "But did you learn the lesson in one day?" asked Kūrṅga. "Yes," was the ready answer. "Then let me hear it," demanded the father. The boy repeated his lesson without a flaw, even in the difficult intonations of the Vedic syllables, called the *udatta*, *anudatta* and *svarita*. The precocity of Bhattārya terrified the parents, who seriously thought of delaying his education for some time. In due course, however, the boy rapidly picked up all learning, Kūrṅga and Govinda personally instructing him in the *śrīṣa*, and the *śāstra*, *Sāstras*.

It has already been said that Lord Ranga and His Consort Lakshmi were the adoptive Father and Mother of Bhattārya. As a child and boy, he really looked upon them as such. But he had now grown up into youth, and was taught that Ranga and Lakshmi should be adored as God and Goddess of the cosmos. Well, the youth was once on a visit to the Temple, when Ranga and Lakshmi were having their retired moments after all the bustle of the day's worship had subsided. Ranga, in feigned anger, bade Bhattārya depart. The youth went a few paces, when Ranga ordered him back. He obeyed. And Ranga asked him - "when thou didst visit us now, what didst thou think us to be?" "As God and Goddess of the universe, Lord," meekly replied Bhattārya. "But," asked Ranga, "what didst thou think us to be before this?" "As my Father and Mother," responded he. "Think of us in this relation always. That pleases us more than the relationship of God and slave." The reader will gather from this that God is more in search of men's hearts than their heads.

Another incident is related about this time. A Smārta pandit took it into his head to test Bhattārya. He entered as the latter was seated in his house, and after preliminaries asked him to explain how a Vaishnava is distinguished from a Smārta. Bhattārya did not care to enter into an elaborate controversy with his adversary on this question, delicate in as much as it is a bone of contention between the two great

division of Brāhmanas in India, the Smārtas (*adventive*) and the Vaiṣṇavas (*visisht-dicantive*), but simply called the questioner's attention to the sign of Chakra and Śaṅkha inscribed on both his arms—a sacrament enjoined by Śāstras on all Vaiṣṇavas. "I see", the Pandit said, "but what authorities, master, can you quote from the Śāstras, justifying you to set to yourself this kind of custom?" queried he. "Sir, replied Bhattārya," I shall not trouble you with all that, for when I shall quote one authority to which we in common profess allegiance, you shall be satisfied. Hast thou not learnt the first sūtra of Āpastambha Dharma, which says वृक्षसदृशं वाग्, वेदम्<sup>1</sup>, i.e., *the wise practices of our wise elders are our best authority*, then come the Vedas? My father Kūrṅga observed the sacrament in question and therefore I do. Enough, for do you not follow in the footsteps of your elders?" The Pandit was thus silenced and went his way.<sup>2</sup>

The young student's course was now finished and it was time that a mate should be found for him. As the reader knows, Kūrṅga had left his kith and kin in the Kāncī land and had adopted Srirangam for his country. So, when the marriage-question of his boy came up, Kūrṅga did not know where to bring a girl from. "Hecce," appealed he to Rāmānjan. "sure, not only have I no relations of mine in these parts, but those others who may willingly offer a girl belong to a lower rank in society. Contracting matrimonial alliance therefore with them can only be distasteful to us as unworthy of our status. What shall we do in this fix?" Such was the great social question which Rāmānjan had to solve in those days. (We know how this same question is still unsolved in our days). Rāmānjan said "We have our Mahāpūrṇa and his people. We must choose from them. As for Sūtra, Śākhā, Brāhmaṇa and Vaiṣṇava, our two clans agree. But they are of the Brīhaccharaṇa set.<sup>3</sup> This is the only difference, which I think may

<sup>1</sup> See Chakrāṅkara-vijaya and other works on this Vaiṣṇava Sacrament. It is like the fire-sacrament which obtained among the primitive Christians.

<sup>2</sup> The Mahāpūrṇas belong to the deodominion. The Vedas have no company with them. Marriages now take place between the Bhāṅgās and Purva-Nambās.



be overlooked. These considerations satisfied them and they applied to this clan for a girl. But they could not give one, said they, with impunity, for the hard and fast barriers dividing clan from clan for a long time, would not permit it, though they would heartily wish for a junction with such a worthy clan as that to which Kūrēṣa belonged, and considering moreover the exemplary personal character of Kūrēṣa himself, apart from every other consideration. So here was a stumbling block though there was willingness on both sides. No further steps were taken, they could not in the face of such insuperable sentimental difficulties. But Bhattar was advancing in years, and must be married at once or all thought of it must once for all be abandoned. His mother Āndāmma was in a perplexity. She made bold to twit her husband on his stolid indifference in such an important affair. "Our neighbours are laughing at us, Sire," she finished. But Kūrēṣa told her in a careless way "Chafe not, old lady! I am helpless in the matter. Knowest thou not that our children belong to Lord Ranga? I have resigned them to His care. Let His will be done, whatever it be." With these soothing words, he left his wife and going to the Temple, laid the case before The Lord and returned home. That night, Mahāpūrṇa's relatives had a dream, in which Ranga commanded them to make matrimonial alliance with Kūrēṣa without ado. They rose and what they had rejected when proposed by, they now voluntarily offered to, Kūrēṣa. For, two maidens by name Akkacohi and Manu were gladly given in marriage to our Bhattārya. A social question--a very hard one indeed--was thus solved in those days, and our hero of this Chapter was thus installed in the order of the householder.

## CHAPTER XXV.

## DHANURDĀSA.

In the last Chapter, appeared two new characters, as our readers are aware. They are Kanakāṅgaṇā,<sup>1</sup> who was standing at the door of Kūrēṣa's house, and her husband Dhanurdāsa, (in Tamil, Pillai-Uraṅga-viṭṭi-dāsa). They became disciples of Rāmānuja. How they became is what shall be narrated in this Chapter.

In Nichalāpuri or Modern Uraiyur (near Trichinopoly)<sup>2</sup> dwelt Dhanurdāsa, so called because he was a good athlete and archer, belonging to the Malla' caste. To his caste-men, he looked as terrible as death. He loved a girl by name Kanakāmbā, who was very beautiful. So much was he enamoured of her that he never left her side for a moment and never took his eyes off her moonlike face. The Chaitra festivities of Lord Ranga now came round. Kanakāmbā was anxious to witness them, and so she left Uraiyur. The lover of course would not let her go alone. So he accompanied her, and walking by her side, held his coverlet over her head in great solicitude to screen her handsome face from the sun's rays. Not a ray should even steal in. So eagerly did he watch her face.

Rāmānuja was returning from his ablutions in the Kaveri river, surrounded by his disciples, to join the procession of Lord Ranga. As he was coming, his eye fell upon this loving pair, and wondering at the intense care the lover was bestowing upon his beloved, turned to his disciples and said — "Sons, look at this curious spectacle. Here is a despicable specimen of humanity who is the slave of a woman! Shameless, in the public streets, see, he pays such attentions to a courtesan! Man may be blind with love for a girl, but he generally keeps it all a secret, but here it is a bold outrage on public decency. It is interesting to me however to see how love can be blind

<sup>1</sup> Or Kanakāmbā, the Tamil name being *Pon-māyochiyār*.

<sup>2</sup> See St. Tiruppanālvār in own Lives of Āshvāra.

<sup>3</sup> A mixed tribe (wrestlers), by an out-caste Kshatriya on a Kshatriya woman.

Let me try to turn this man's love from the girl to Lord Ranga." So saying, he set a few disciples to shadow the pair and find where they lived, and return with news. On his disciples bringing him the necessary intelligence, Rāmānuja sent for Dhanurdāsa, and looking on him most graciously, asked who he was and what brought him to Srirangam. The looks of Rāmānuja, filled with kindness, acted on him like a spell; for Dhanurdāsa made obeisance and explained that his residence was Uraiyār, where he was a renowned gymnast, and that he came to Srirangam on a holy visit to Ranga. "But," said Rāmānuja, "wilt thou allow me, son, to chide thee for thy open violation of public morality? Thou sayest thou art a powerful gymnast, but how is this consistent with thy open love-makings to a girl, shamelessly? A sense of shame stole on Dhanurdāsa at this well-meant rebuke, but he replied "Holy Sir, how can I help it? She is so lovely, this dear Kanakāmbā. Her eyes are more beautiful than the lotus. My heart and those eyes are one. The least exposure to the sun, how can those charming eyes bear? Did they fade, my heart would burst. This is the truth, O Saint, now tell me if I am wrong." Rāmānuja listened to this guileless speech, in silence, and looking on Dhanurdāsa with pity, said:—"But, son, if I could show you better eyes than those?"—"Ah, Sir," interrupted Dhanurdāsa, "if so, it were a great gain to me, and that by your favour." "Come then at once", so saying, Rāmānuja led him in to the Temple, and showing him Ranga's Figure, recumbent on His couch, Śēṣha, "look at those bewitching eyes," said he, catching hold of his hand, "they are the eyes of Ranga, Lord Ranga, the Father of this universe, look steadily and study their beauty." Dhanurdāsa did so, and he saw something there extraordinary, divine, and he found he could neither stir from the spot where he stood, nor move his eyes from the Vision before him. He was completely hypnotised as it were. "God's grace has descended on this person," murmured Rāmānuja to himself, as he watched and left for his monastery Dhanurdāsa gave up food and sleep from that day and was daily found in the temple, looking on Ranga with straining eyes. Rāmānuja now sent for him and asked him

how he felt. He said "Master! how can I be grateful enough to you for the bliss into which you have deigned to steep a wretch like myself. Make me thy slave and complete the work of salvation you have, unasked, taken into your hands." Rāmānuja smiled and conferring on him the sacramental *Pañcha-samskāra*, took him into his flock. Kanakāmbā came to know of all this, and a wish rose in her mind to become herself a disciple. So she sped to Rāmānuja, and repentantly implored him to take her also into his Vaishnavā fold. Rāmānuja, overcome by her solicitations, did so, and joining her with her lover, now as wife to husband,—blessed them both, and allowed them to work in his math as his most dutiful servants. It is chronicled that the wife even excelled her husband, in wisdom and all other spiritual perfections, by the wonderful grace shed by the Holy Feet of Rāmānuja. Like Hanumān, who did every service to Rāma was this pair to Rāmānuja.

Dhanurdāsa had so far been metamorphosed, that he became the greatest favourite of Rāmānuja, so rare too was his piety, that though he belonged to a lower caste, he had privileges conferred upon him. For often, Rāmānuja was found returning from his river-bath leaning on the shoulders of Dhanurdāsa, though when he went to the bath he lean on Dāsarathi, a Brāhmin. A Brāhmin is unclean before bath, and clean after it, and thus Dhanurdāsa as a Śūdra, and Dāsarathi as a Brāhmin must have changed places. But Rāmānuja had it the other way, as told above, which much exercised the minds of his Brāhmin disciples. They once made bold to ask him for an explanation, which he condescended to tender thus "O Vaishnavās, have ye not heard that learning, riches and high-birth swell a fool with pride, but adorn a wiseman?¹ Thus Mallā is utterly destitute of this threefold vice, but ye are not. Hence he is fit enough to be touched by me and to prop on." On hearing this, the disciples bent their heads in shame, and dared make no protest, but all the same, malice rankled in

¹ विद्यया दौ धनमर स्तुतयो निजबोधः ।  
एनेश्वरप्रसिमाना येन श्रुतं तदना ॥

their breasts against Dhanurdāsa, that he a Sūdra should stand so high in their master's estimation, their own prestige as Brāhmanas being jeopardized thereby. Rāmānuja was aware of this and wished to cure his Brāhmana disciples of the disease, which in his opinion was *spiritually* fatal. To convince them of their error, he resorted to a device. He called one of his intimate disciples privately, and ordered him to secrete all the clothes of the objectors, at night when they were asleep—clothes which it is our custom daily to wash and hang up to dry. The order was duly carried out. The disciples rose in the morning, and finding their clothes were missing, fell foul of each other and made a great hubbub. Rāmānuja was witnessing all this fracas, unseemly to a Brāhmana in his opinion, and smiled. To put a stop to further disturbance, he called them all to order, and putting on the mien of a judge, listened to their complaint, and condoning them for their loss, advised them to be reconciled to each other, and wait for better luck whenever it might please Providence to send it them. He let some time pass thus, and one night, he called Dhanurdāsa to his side, and was engaged in conversation with him alone for some time. He now called the aggrieved parties, and in the hearing of Dhanurdāsa, spoke to them thus: "Sons, I remember well your grief and strife at the loss of your clothes some time ago. I will now tell you something which will fetch you much profit. Indeed it will very much more than compensate for your loss. See, Dhanurdāsa is with me. I will keep him here engaged. You will proceed to his house unobserved. As it is very late in the night, you will find his wife Kanakāmbā drowned in sleep. She has a lot of precious jewels about her person. Go and cleverly strip her of them all and come away." Taking these orders, the Brāhmanas stole to Dhanurdāsa's house like thieves. They effected entrance, and to their joy found Kanakāmbā fast asleep on her bed, decked out in all her splendid finery. They approached her softly, and deftly stripped her of all her jewels on one side, as she lay sideways. As they were doing it, she awoke, but just opening her eyes a little, closed them again, lest they might flee away in fright. Nor did she move a limb, lest they might be disturbed in the middle of their work. For she saw

they were Vaishnavas, for whom she had nothing but love and reverence. She was glad they were taking away but their own property, for whatever effects she owned in this world were not really hers but entrusted to her for their sake. This is how property is to be spiritually viewed, and we have already said that in spiritual perfections, Kanakāmbā excelled even her husband. Well, she lay thus quiet till every one of the jewels was removed from one side. She was now anxious that the Vaishnavas should complete their work, and not go away with only half work done. She therefore gently rolled over to her other side, as if in sleep. This movement however created fright and put the thieves to flight. They returned Rāmānuja seeing them back, gave leave to Dhanurdāsa now to go home, as it was unusually late. As soon as he went a few steps, Rāmānuja called the robber-disciples, and taking from them the jewels, hid them dog the footsteps of Dhanurdāsa in the dark, unobserved by him, and watch all that night take place in his house and report the same to him correctly. They did so. In the house, Kanakāmbā was expecting her husband back from his rather long absence that night, and when she heard his footsteps, she rose and washed his feet and welcomed him home. He looked at her, but she looked very strange with one side of her bare and the other side only decked with ornaments. "What is this, lady?" he cried, taken aback. "Nothing wrong, Lord," said she soothingly, "I will explain all and you will be pleased. The Brāhmāṇas, who you know are our Gurus, came here, and I was lying as if asleep. They laid hands on me and took all the jewels on my right side. One effects are theirs, Sir, as you know. So to let them have all, I quietly turned round on to my left side. With all my care in doing so,—to make them believe I was fast in the arms of sleep—it gave them alarm, and they, to my great regret, ran away." On hearing this, Dhanurdāsa flew at her in rage, saying—"Foolish woman! thou hast spoiled the work. It was thy duty to have lain quite motionless. If thy jewels were theirs, theirs also was the liberty to take them in their own way. But instead of letting them exercise that liberty, thou didst dare exercise it in allowing thyself to move just when they had done half their work. They would probably have turned

thee round, hadst thou been perfectly still. Well, thou hast spoilt it all. At any rate, half thy jewels have been well invested, the other half is vanity." Thus half consoled as it were, he went to sleep, with his thoughts fixed on the Holy Feet of Rāmānjan.

The Vaishnava Brāhmanas who were outside, eavesdropping, heard all this conversation and hurrying back to Rāmānjan, gave him a full report of it. Rāmānjan on receiving it addressed them thus "O wisecracks, do you now see? Some fellows, fools very likely, made away with your clothes some time back. But on that trifling account, you fell to quarrelling and, calling each other names, made such an inglorious uproar. But here is Dhanurdāsa, whose mind was not in the least disturbed, albeit he lost so many valuable jewels. Please tell me, sirs, whose wisdom is great, yours or his? Know then that caste is of no importance. It is virtue that is most prized." Thus did Rāmānjan sermon to the disciples who bore a grudge against Dhanurdāsa. They were crest-fallen and spoke not.

The night was spent thus. The next morning, he sent for Dhanurdāsa, and drew from him an account of all the incidents which took place in his house, and restoring to him his jewels, blessed him. Dhanurdāsa never refused what was given him, for, if he did so, it would be like opposing his Guru which behoves not a true disciple. Unquestioning obedience to the spiritual preceptor is one of the most important canons laid down by Vaishnavism. And this, the hero of this chapter observed to the very letter. It is recorded that Dhanurdāsa's regenerate life was full of such incidents. One such interesting event is recounted by Periya-vācchānpillai in his commentary on St. Namināshvār's Tiruvirttam, v. 99 "Inacchol". Kūrōṣa read Tiruvāymozbi, and Dhanurdāsa, who heard it, melted into tears. Observing this passionate ebullition of feeling, Kūrōṣa exclaimed "Fie on us, beloved Dhanurdāsa! We are known to fame as very clever dialectic gymnasts over knotty questions of philosophy and all that sort, but none of us can claim the privilege of thy birth which brings to thee a love-lorn heart, which we so hardly struggle to possess." It

is related again in the 36,000 commentary on Tiruvāymozhi (VII-4-1 "Āshi") that Dhanurdāsa was called "Mahāmata" by the worthies of Srirangam, inasmuch as his love for Ranganātha was so intense that whenever, the Lord was taken in processions in the streets, 'Mahāmata' walked in front with his sword drawn, so that he may cut any who dared to do any act, in the least offensive to the Deity. Vidura of the Mahābhārata fame was called Mahāmata, inasmuch as his love for Krishna made him to examine the seat, which he had himself prepared for him in his own house, lest he might have unwittingly allowed any danger to lurk in there. Mahāmata literally means *wiser than wisdom*, this expression having the force of *wisdom blinded by love for God*. Dhanurdāsa also was thus so wise, i. e., so love-blind as to fear danger for one (God), who is above all dangers.

Kanakāmbā, the wife of Dhanurdāsa, proved to be an exemplary devotee of Rāmānuja, for she looked upon him as the Saviour. It is related that a number of disciples approached the lady one day and expressed to her their doubts as to whom they should look upon as their true saviour, for it was in their experience that many professed themselves as saviours, and they also severally owed to more than one preceptor the spiritual knowledge which they had received and the good-conduct which they had adopted in their life, and it was thus evident that if Rāmānuja was to be looked upon as saviour, there were others as well to whom a measure of this qualification was ascribable. Kanakāmbā on hearing this, simply flourished her locks and gathering them together into a knot, tied it up with a red thread, and kept silent. The disciples understood what she meant to convey by this behaviour. The numerous black hairs signified many teachers but the saviour was Rāmānuja alone, represented by the red thread,—Rāmānuja who crowned them all and bound them all together into his representative self, in other words united into his unique person, all the functions of minor teachers who went before and came after him. The disciples wondered at her steadfastness and fidelity to Rāmānuja, and went away congratulating her on her spiritual eminence.



## CHAPTER XXVI.

## DĀSARATHI; MARANĒRI-NAMBI.

Such were the additions that were being daily made to Rāmānuja's holy band.

We have seen in a previous chapter that Mudali y āndān or Dāsarathi was Rāmānuja's sister's son. A few particulars about this sage are related at this juncture. We have seen in the last chapter that when Rāmānuja went to the river Kaveri for his daily bath, he would lean on Dāsarathi for support, and when returning from the bath he would lean on Dhanurdāsa. One day Rāmānuja was asked why, when he donned the robes of the Sannyāsin (ascetic), he did not give up Dāsarathi, inasmuch as that order demanded that all kith and kin should be renounced. Rāmānuja said that Dāsarathi was an exception to this rule, for he was to him as valuable as his triple-staff (*tridanda*). When he went to Kōttiyūr to receive instructions from Gōshthi Pārma, he had told the latter the same thing. "So, gentle-folk," said he to the questioners, "if it is possible for me, an ascetic, to give up my staff, only then can Dāsarathi leave me. He, though a bodily relation, is yet a kin to my soul."

Rāmānuja was once teaching Dāsarathi *Tiru-vay-mōshi*, in all his leisure moments. One day, as he was teaching it from his couch, Dāsarathi was so overcome by the sentiments of love to God contained therein, that he stopped repeating the verses with Rāmānuja as is usually done. Rāmānuja saw this and was glad to see Dāsarathi so sensitive to devout emotions, such as characterize real mystics. "Son," he said, "it is no wonder our love-saints so move your heart. For the Vedas themselves have been given out to the world in the shape of the Drāvida Prabandhas, even as 'the Vedas themselves are said to have incarnated as Rāmāyana, when the Lord of the Vedas himself incarnated on earth as Rāma' "1

<sup>1</sup> वेदोपेयैरुक्ति जालेदस्तरचाल्यये ।

वेद-प्रबन्धनसादृश्यं सदाशिवप्रबन्धना ॥ [*Sāra-prabandha*].

Thus were many days spent in useful occupation, and in thinking out projects for the amelioration of the world. One day, Attubhāy the daughter of Mahāpūrṇa, left her mother-in-law's house to her father's. "What is the matter, daughter?", he asked her. "Father," she complained, "you know we women have to go to the river to bathe, after our monthlies. I asked my mother-in-law to accompany me, girl as I am and having to go alone. But she chose to be ill-tempered and further taunted me by saying 'Your parents have indeed sent so many servant girls as a part of your trousseau (*strodhāna*), why not take one of them with you instead of asking me?' I felt this peer so keenly that I have come to you." "I do not know anything of these matters, poor girl!" said he coaxingly, "go and inform Rāmānjan, who is our Head." So Attubhāy hastened to Rāmānjan and laid her grievance before him. "Oh, I see your mother-in-law wants a servant for thee at her house," said Rāmānjan, "here is one, take him." So saying, he called Dāsarathi and bid him accompany the young lady, and work under her orders, considering himself as part of her *strodhāna*. Dāsarathi immediately obeyed, and following the young lady to the river where she bathed, worked in her house like a slave. The sudden advent of Dāsarathi, and that for purposes of menial service, excited the curiosity of the members of the household, for they knew him as a venerable person attached to Rāmānjan, and for whom they had devout regards. So, they asked him to say what made him leave Rāmānjan and come to their house unasked, and that for gratuitous service? "Friends," he said, "I am not master of myself, nor can I judge why my Master Rāmānjan wishes me to serve in your household. He bid me go with this maiden and be at her service. I have done so. For reasons and motives, if you are particular, I must refer you to our Rāmānjan." They all ran to the monastery and humbly falling at the feet of Rāmānjan, besought him to say why such a high personage as Dāsarathi was directed to go to their humble dwelling for drudgery. They submitted farther that this measure imperilled the safety of their souls inasmuch as they were put to the necessity of using a

saint as a slave. "We are already sinners, Sire," pleaded they, "pray let not this addition be made." Rāmānuja simply answered 'Good men, we sent our Uśarathi as a part of our bride's outfit, for the little Attuhāy is my guru's daughter, and therefore our daughter. If you are not willing to accept what, in duty bound, we have sent, you are welcome to return it.' They returned home and begged Dāvarathi to kindly return to Rāmānuja.

At this time another momentous question turned up. One of Yāmuna's disciples was Māranēri-Nambi of Māranēri, of the Pāṇḍya country. He was a Śūdra i. e., a member of the fourth caste of the Hindu social system. He lived with Mahāpūrṇa, who was a disciple himself of Yāmuna, and a Brāhmana. Māranēri being a beloved disciple of Yāmuna, Mahāpūrṇa had great regards for his master's man. Māranēri fell sick. He prayed to Mahāpūrṇa thus—"Sire, though my body is of the Śūdra, it is one which by service to my master Yāmuna, is sacred. It is going to die now. Pray cast it not to dogs. Who will throw to dogs the oblations (*puṇḍāśa*) set apart for Devas? My body belongeth to Yāmuna." Pūrṇa quieted him by saying that he need have no anxiety on that account, that all would go well. With this assurance, Māranēri breathed his last, and Pūrṇa cremated him—instead of burying, which is the custom for the Śūdras and had the *Brāhmanedha* rites performed, which is only ordained for the Brāhmanas.

Rāmānuja, Pūrṇa's disciple,—came to know this. Though he was himself a reformer, yet, in his opinion, time was not yet ripe for extending all Brāhmanic privileges to Śūdras. They must be gradually raised, first in spirit, i. e., in principles and customs and morals, and then only such social privileges granted, as may not outrage at once the communal sense of the composite body of the Āryans. Rāmānuja was doing this work cautiously, even so having to face much obloquy from the higher caste-men. While so, for Mahāpūrṇa to have extended the highest privileges of a Brāhmaṇa, viz., the *Brāhma-Medha* obsequies, to a Śūdra, however

high he may be spiritually was a shock to the communal feeling which it was not expedient to deliver. Rāmānuja going to Mahāpūrpa, and making due obeisance, argued with him in this manner and finished by saying "Sire, I am *building* a system, but you are *pulling* it down." To which, Pūrpa answered thus:—"Rāmānuja, I admit the force of your objections. But I am for radical reforms, not half-measures, and then, we ought to have a margin for signal exceptions like Māranēri. Besides, have I not precedents to justify my present act? Am I superior to Rāma, the Hero of the Ikshvāku race,? Is Māranēri inferior to the Bird Jātāyn, for whom Rāma performed the *Brahmamedha*?<sup>1</sup> Am I greater than Dharma-putra? and is Māranēri lower than Vidura, to whom the same *Samskāra* was administered? And are the truths uttered by St. Nammāshvār, in his *Tiruvāymozhi* "Payilum [iii-7] and "Nedamāl" [viii 10], decanting on the greatness of godly men, irrespective of caste and color, mere senseless babble?" On hearing this, Rāmānuja was silent. "But in my turn; I have to propose to you one question," began Pūrpa "and that is this. How is it that I found Māranēri, uttering neither 'Ranga is my refuge,' nor 'Yāmuna is my refuge,' when he died? You know this is what is enjoined on all the Faithful at time of death," Rāmānuja said. "Such an omission is no ground of accusation against him. For I know he had abandoned himself entirely at that moment to God, trusting Him in His promise that 'at the time of death, it is not for the dying man to remember or say anything, but for God to remember the dying man and do the needful.'<sup>2</sup>" But retorted Pūrpa, "this is a Promise made by Varāha, when he when he was consumed with love for His Consort Bhā. How can such a Madman's Word be depended upon? Rāmānuja answered "Know you not, Sire, that our salvation is sure when our

<sup>1</sup> Rāmāyaṇa, III-66.—

"Libations of the stream they peered  
In honor of the vulture lord,  
With solemn ritual to the slain,  
As scripture's holy texts ordain."

<sup>2</sup> {Varāha Purāṇa}

Father and Mother are ever together?"<sup>1</sup> Pūrṇa was pleased with this apt and intelligent answer.

At this time happened another incident. Śrī Rāmānuja was one day observed leading a poor dumb man with him and shutting himself up with him in the monastery in a private chamber. Kūrṇa was watching this unusual conduct on the part of the high pontiff; and looking through a chink in the closed door, observed Rāmānuja showing the dumb man by means of signs, his own holy feet, and making him understand thereby that their contemplation would be the sole means of his salvation. Kūrṇa, on seeing this supreme act of grace, soliloquised to himself thus: "Alas that I have been born Kūrṇa, a man of learning and wisdom, I had fain been born dumb and boorish to have deserved such precious free grace as this man!" It is said, that Kūrṇa swooned away under the weight of this reflection.

About this time, Rāmānuja undertook a journey to T. Kōṭṭiyār on a visit to his A. Ārya Geṣṭhi Pūrṇa. He was found seated in a high loft in his house absorbed in contemplation. Rāmānuja waited for an opportunity and submissively asked what it was he so intently dwelt on, in other words what was the *mantra* he muttered to himself and the *dhyaṇa* or object of his thought. Pūrṇa said: "Noble son my only *mantra* is the Holy Name of Yāmuna and my only *dhyaṇa* is his blessed figure (*vigraha*) which fascinated me as I studied it when he was bathing in the holy Kaveri waters. "The Guru a Holy Name is our hymn and his image the object of our loving contemplation"<sup>2</sup> as say the Śāstras. Rāmānuja prostrated himself before his Guru and returned to Srīraṅgam.

<sup>1</sup> "When the son is ever with the Father," as a Christian would say.

<sup>2</sup> गुरोः परावृत्तं यादं ध्यानं नाम्नां भवेत्

## CHAPTER XXVII

## CHOLA'S PERSECUTIONS.

It is written "When the gracious eyes of a good Guru fall on a person, his salvation is sure, be he dumb or deaf, fool or wise, old or young"<sup>1</sup> Rāmānuja was showering his graces on all in this way, and was holding his Vedānta-discourses in splendid style with a splendid array of disciples, headed by such illustrious personages as Kūrēṣa, Dāsarathi and Devarāt. The Chola-king, for the time being, happened to be a most bigoted Saiva. He was bent upon destroying Viṣṇu temples, and otherwise persecuting Vaiṣṇavas, though his son (Vikrama Chola. 1113—1128 A C), wisely hinted that he had set to himself an impossible task, inasmuch as he could never destroy the two strong props of the Vaiṣṇavas, the *Tirumōlishi* of St. Neumāshvār and *Rāmāyana* of Vālmiki. The Saiva system is anti-Vedic, and Vaiṣṇavas condemn it as un-Āryan and erroneous. The king, then resident at Chidambaram (or Gaṅgaikonda Cholaपुरam) was so begotting an adherent of this system that he adopted coercive measures to bring men of all other faiths into its fold. For this purpose, he had a proclamation issued in which was written "There is no (God) greater than Siva,"<sup>2</sup> and every one, especially every learned man, was commanded to affix his signature to the document in proof of his assent to this proposition. Many obeyed either for fear of being punished, in case of refusal, or on grounds of convenience, or enticed by hopes of rewards of land and money from the king, and others deserted the country and hid themselves. Nālārān, a disciple of Kūrēṣa, happened to be the king's minister. "What is the use, your Majesty?" said he "of your obtaining signatures from all men indiscriminately. No good purpose is served thereby. If you can obtain the signature of the two veterans of the Vaiṣṇava faith, Kūrēṣa and Rāmānuja, living in Srirangam, that will be a capital stroke of policy, and your declaration about Siva's pre-eminency will only then have

<sup>1</sup> ब्रह्मसूत्रप्रकाशे पं. गुरुवाक्षित्तमम् ।

मन्त्रार्थसंग्रहेः सायनविप्रादुक्तिम् ॥

<sup>2</sup> ऐकान्त्यवर्तमानम् ।

received irrefutable testimony." Chola immediately directed messengers to go to Srirangam and bring Rāmānuja. They arrived and standing before the gate of the monastery declared their errand and said that Rāmānuja must go with them to the King's Court forthwith. The door-keepers rushed inside and whispered the news softly to Kūrēta,<sup>1</sup> who was then engaged in serving bath-water to Rāmānuja. Kūrēta foresaw the dangers of persecution that threatened, and without telling Rāmānuja what he meant doing, he donned the colored robes of Rāmānuja, and taking up his *tridanda*, emerged from the monastery, and saying "I am Rāmānuja, proceed," to the King's men, stepped on. Māhāpūrṇa, observing this, followed Kūrēta on this ominous expedition.

Rāmānuja, coming from his bath, called for his colored robe and staff, but Dāśarathi told him that Kūrēta had worn them and departed with the King's messengers, who had come for Rāmānuja, in order to compel them to sign a declaration-paper maintaining Siva's superiority over all other gods. On hearing this, Rāmānuja exclaimed in more distress of heart than—"Oh, what will become of Kūrēta and Māhāpūrṇa, in this war of bigotry? Pray let me wear the white garments of Kūrēta, that I may not be discovered by that heretic-chief's myrmidons!" "You must not, Holy Sir, even remain in this spot," submitted Dāśarathi in fear, "lest harm should come to your valuable life." Rāmānuja's fears were further aroused, but he knew not how he should act in such an emergency, and so he hurried to his Chapel—Dēty Varada, and made supplication to him meltingly to ward off the evil which threatened to engulf them all and to obliterate, by one stroke, all the good work that had for years been so patiently done. And in giving vent to his feelings, he prayed in the fashion of St. Bhaktāngra-Rama<sup>2</sup> thus—

"If the luckless Buddhas, Jainas and those,  
That follow Radra's feet, in poignant words,

<sup>1</sup> Read Topic 146 Pp. 161 ff. in our "Divine Wisdom of Dravida Saints."

<sup>2</sup> Read his life in our *Lives of Jñānīs*. The verse is the 8th in his *Tirumōlai*:—"Tēyappōḍa Semaṇar, &c."

No hateful talk of Thee, O, Lord! Thy slaves,  
 With anguish keen pierced, sore sickening die  
 Hence Thou that swellest them in huge proud list,  
 If chance e'er throws athrower far from path,  
 Such God-deny'ng souls, but righteous work I woeen  
 I then and there their heads lay low "

"Good God," said he "the Chola king is very powerful just now. I leave to Thee how and when thou wilt do away with him. I will now leave this country and elsewhere, I will, if necessary, resort to measures which will hasten this tyrant's destruction." So saying, he looked northward in the direction of Melkote,<sup>1</sup> and taking his disciples with him, left Srirangam with a heavy heart. In the meanwhile Chola's men coming to know that it was not the real Rāmānuja who was trapped came in pursuit. By this time Rāmānuja was crossing a broad sandy river, and sighted the pursuers. "What shall we do?" he cried, addressing his disciples, "let us take handfuls of sand and with this mantra<sup>2</sup> repeated over it, throw them in their path as we proceed, and leave the rest to God." They all did as he said. When the royal emissaries trod on the enchanted sand, their feet stuck, and their pursuit was thus checked. "Ah, these Brāhmanas have used magic against us" exclaimed they, and beat back in confusion. Rāmānuja proceeded now on his way with Lord Ranga for his help.

They threaded their way through trackless wilds and before they arrived at the base of the Nilagiri Hills, Rāmānuja and his disciples missed each other in the wilderness. They were wandering in search of each other when one disciple met a few forest men busy ploughing land. These happened to be the disciples of Tiruma at Nallān Chakravarti,—an old disciple of Rāmānuja. Meeting a Srivaishnava, they naturally felt themselves attached to him, and accosting him asked:—"Sire, whence art thou coming?" "From Srirangam, good folk,"

<sup>1</sup> Or Śrī-Nāriyān-puram, on a hill, 20 miles north of the city of Maishir.

<sup>2</sup> The 4th verse "Kailāsa-jagadale" of Periyāzhvār's Tirumozhi, [V.4.4.]



he replied "There is our Rāmānuja doing well? Is all going on well with our blessed Lord Ranga?" asked they "Good folk, where is God? What do we care for His blessed state? Know that our Master Rāmānuja had to desert Srirangam on account of Chola's persecutions, and we know not whither he has strayed away in this wilderness", replied they in grief. On hearing this, the men ceased their work in the fields, and for six days searched for Rāmānuja without food and water. On the sixth night, in the gloom, they heard men's voices. They were sure the voices were like the voices of Brāhmanas. They listened. Rāmānuja's party also had lighted a fire which the searching party had lit on a field to warm themselves. For it was a dark night, rainy and chilly. Rāmānuja had reached the foot of a hill and his other disciples had joined him. They were all wet and hungry and shivering with cold. And Rāmānuja, after descrying the light, was asking his disciples to carry him thither. The search-party guessed already they must be the objects of their search, but of course were not sure, and so, as soon as they heard their conversation, cried out—"Hither, sire, come hither we shall show you the way." They joined one another. The guests were led to the blazing fire and warmed, dry clothes were provided and every service was gladly rendered to make them comfortable. And then they inquired "Whence are you all coming, sire?" "From Srirangam," they said. "What is our Rāmānuja doing there?" they queried. Rāmānuja kept silent, but his disciples asked,— "How do ye, good men, know Rāmānuja?" "Sire," they said, "our guru is Nallān Chakravartī.<sup>1</sup> The last advice he left with us was that Rāmānuja should be cherished in our hearts as the Grand Guru, and that His holy feet alone were our Way to salvation. Thus we know Rāmānuja." "Then here he is." So saying, they pointed out Rāmānuja amongst them. On this

<sup>1</sup> This was the personage who performed cremation to a Chandāla's dead body which came floating down the Vaigai river near Kāchi, inasmuch as the body bore the marks of Discus and Conch, the symbols of Vishnu. The cowherd-folk resented this, but Lord Varada said:—  
'*ஈட்கெழுபெருவரை, ஈட்குறவரை,*' i.e., "He is bad to you, but good to me."

discovery, they fell on their faces and clinging fondly to his feet, wept for joy. They then brought grain and honey in abundance, and new pots, in which to fry the former, pound it into powder, and mix with honey and eat it. Rāmānūja and his men gratefully partook of the same, after having been greatly exhausted by journeys and elemental inclemencies, and retired for a long-wished-for rest.

The next morning, they were all up and prepared to continue their journey northwards towards the hills and beyond. One of the forest-men and one disciple<sup>1</sup> were chosen to carry tidings to Srirangam and inquire how it fared with Kārṣṇa, and the rest—forty-five disciples, it is written—journeyed northward, guided by the forest-men. They performed about six days' journey and reached a certain fastness in the heart of the Nilagiri Hill range, where the chief of the forest-men lived. The chief was gone out hunting. The guides conducted their holy party however to his house, where they were introduced to the chief's wife, whom, as their high mistresses, they addressed thus—"Madam, these holy men are our Gurus, we commend them to your care. Pray attend to all their wants, and whatever it may cost, debit it to us and write off the same in the accounts against wages due to us by your master." Thus entrusting their holy burden to good hands, they departed. The chief now returned from his hunting, and was told all. "How can we eat, while these good men are hungry," he said, and despatched his men to conduct them to a neighbouring village, to the house of a Brāhmana, named Kattalai-vāri, sending an abundance of provisions to entertain them with, without the least delay. The women-gurus saw this done and returned and reported the same to their chief.

The wife of Kattalai-vāri was the reputed Kongil-parāṭṭi or Cbelāñchalāmbā<sup>2</sup>. She prostrated herself before them and asked whether she might not cook for them. They replied in the negative. "To whose feet, sir, do ye belong?" she

<sup>1</sup> This is said to be Māreṭi-yādān. Another, Ammaṅgi-amudā, is said to have also accompanied them.

<sup>2</sup> For brevity, we shall call her Kongil.

inquired "Rāmānuja," they replied. "Doubt not, sire, I also belong to him," rejoined she. "Strange, pray give an account how that came about," asked the guests. "Sire," she began, "once rains failed, and famine was on the land. We therefore left our native land and went to Srirangam; where myself and my husband engaged a house, living on the second floor thereof. I was daily watching Rāmānuja emerging into the streets, after his morning's duties in the temple were fulfilled, for the sake of entering seven houses to collect his daily alms. As his holiness strolled in the streets like a very god on earth, many people fell at his feet, among the number I particularly observed Akalanāṁṁti-śāhvān, the husband of Tripurā-dēvi. One day, Rāmānuja entered my poor house. Observing it, I ran down the stairs and stood behind a door, attentive. "Good dame, what is in thy mind," he asked me, and I humbly said.—"Holy Sire, thou comest a-begging to poor peoples' houses, whilst I see kings fall at thy feet in the streets. Please solve this mystery for me." He said:—"Dear daughter, I tell thee some bits of news about God, and they become attached to my person. And it is my duty to go to poor houses, and go anywhere where there may be people who wish to hear good tidings of God." Then, Holy Father," said I, "may I not be the recipient of a little of it?" "Surely," said he, "and he told me what was good for me and took his departure. Now rains fell, and famine had left our land, and we resolved to join our native country; but I had forgotten the good advice given to me by Rāmānuja. I was troubled and did not know what to do. As I was pensive however, Rāmānuja suddenly dropped into our poor house again. I ran down the stairs to meet him and excusing myself for my bad memory, begged of him to tell the tidings of God once more to me, as I was about to leave Srirangam for my native village. Looking upon me graciously, he impressed upon me once more the Dvaya-māntra, along with the Holy Names of all the Apostles of our faith, God downwards and ending with himself. He was leaving me, but I entreated him to stay a while and bestow on me something which I might carry as remembrance and which I might

worship as my saviour. And he was so kind as to grant me his holy sandals. And then myself and my husband returned home with this blessed gift. Never since have I had the joy of seeing Rāmanuja again. It is many years ago now." Rāmanuja heard all this, but he was half in *cognito*, wearing the white garments of Kūrēta and many days had gone past so that Kongil had not recognised him yet. Learning, as he did, the account given, he gave her permission to cook and commanded a disciple of his to watch her performances. She left and her procedure was thus:—By repeating "Blessed be Rāmanuja," she sprinkled her head with water so consecrated. She washed the whole house with cowdung and water, took fresh pots, and wearing a clean washed cloth, cooked meals, all the time muttering the holy prebendās, and after placing the viands in clean baskets, entered into her chapel. Here she placed Rāmanuja's sandals on a raised dais, and repeating "Rāmanuja's Holy Feet are my sole refuge," offered the viands she carried, and returning to the guests, begged them to wash their feet and get ready to discuss the meals before it became cold. The disciple, told out to watch her, was now called aside by Rāmanuja to give an account and he recounted exactly all that she did, but he said—"It was dark in the chapel. There were two black objects, which looked long, which she worshipped and to which she offered food." "Daughter," called her Rāmanuja, "please let us see what you worshipped in the dark." She brought them and said—"Holy Sir, these are the sandals of my Rāmanuja, which he gave to me at Srirangam. I daily worship them and eat only after offering food to them. And this day I did the same. Nothing more." Rāmanuja measured them with his feet, and said—"Curious enough, they suit me, but come here, daughter." She approached and he whispered into her ears thus:—"Daughter, know that these disciples of mine are very strict. They see the sandals suit my feet, but this does not quite satisfy them; however, please let me hear what Rāmanuja taught thee." Kongil repeated the mantra taught her before. "Good, but dost thou discover Rāmanuja in this band?" asked Rāmanuja. Kongil returned inside and bringing a light examined Rāmanuja's feet, and exclaimed—

"Sure, your feet are indeed like Rāmanuja's, but you wear white robes which he did not and could not as a Sanyāsin. I am confused, Father." Rāmanuja, moved by her anxiety and no longer wishing to hide himself from her said—"Dear daughter, I am Rāmanuja." On hearing this, her confusion turned into joy and wonder. She fell on her face and nestling to his feet, wept for joy. "Disciples," said Rāmanuja, turning to them, "now there need be no more hesitation on your part to eat her food. Sri Kṛṣṇa ate Vidura's food, for it was pure and good! Such is our Kongil's food. Go and eat." They did so, but Rāmanuja did not. So Kongil was troubled and cried, "But how about you, father?" "Daughter," he said, "you see the food has been offered to my sandals. So I cannot eat that." "Then, father," said she, "I shall bring milk and fruits, offer them to your God and eat." Rāmanuja did so, and all then rested, steeped in bliss.

The devout Kongil collected the remnants of food left, after they all ate, and taking it and the foot-washed water of Rāmanuja to her husband, who was sleeping aloft, roused him and let him eat. But he saw her fasting. "Why dost thou not eat, dear?" asked he. "Lord," she answered, "Rāmanuja and his disciples have come to our house from Sri-rangam, and they have slept away without taking food." "What can I do, lady?" he asked. "Cannot you, Lord, become Rāmanuja's disciple?" "If you please," said he. On obtaining this promise on the race, she ate and went to rest after her hard day's loving labour. Next day, she awoke and approaching Rāmanuja, entreated him to stay yet longer, and deign to take her husband to his fold by administering to him necessary Vāishnava-sacraments. He gladly consented and did every thing needed and reading to them many a useful lesson for their future welfare, sojourned in their good home for a few days, and taking leave of the good pair by blessing them, pursued his journey.

<sup>1</sup> विदुराकाशविदुसुते सुखीनिगुबन्धित्व [Mahābhārata, Udyoga 90-42]

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

## RĀMĀNUJA AND KĀISŪR.

The Nilagiri Range was thus traversed, and threading their way with toil north-west,<sup>1</sup> they reached Vahnī-Pushkarinī.<sup>2</sup> Resting here for a few days, they made their way to Mithilā-Sāligrāma.<sup>3</sup> Here they found the place full of Vira-Saivas, or staunch adherents of Śivaism, who gave the new arrivals scant or no welcome. Rāmānuja hit upon a method to turn their minds. He called Dāsaratha to his side and said "Son, here is the fountain from which the village folk carry their drinking water for their households. Unnoticed by them, dip your feet into the water and watch the effect." He did as bid. The villagers drank the water and their hostility for the new comers turned into civility. They even went so far as to become Rāmānuja's followers in Faith. A memento of this incident of the water, magnetised by the holy feet of the best of his disciples, effecting a miracle, is to this day still preserved in the shape of a small shrine erected on the spot, in which are installed the feet of Rāmānuja for devout worship by all, and the holy fountain is close by, connected with the shrine by a flight of steps, by which every pilgrim descends into it and reverently sprinkles the waters over his head. "The town deserves the name of Sāligrāma, i. e., the stone symbol of Viśhva," said Rāmānuja in joy, on account of this strange event.

Of the many who embraced the Faith here, the chief was a Brahmin of Andhra-prāṇa,<sup>4</sup> who became a most devout follower of Rāmānuja. Rāmānuja taught him all the arcane secrets of the Vedānta in the Temple of the Lord Nara-

<sup>1</sup> The exact route is not recorded, but as our information goes, Rāmānuja seems to have followed the banks of the Kāveri as far as Kātyāvanapattanam, then taking a short cut, reach Kāveri again at Rāmanāthapuram.

<sup>2</sup> Rāmanāthpūr, on the Kāveri River about 40 miles west of Mādhurai.

<sup>3</sup> Now known as Miris and Sāligrama, two villages, about 30 miles west of Mysore.

<sup>4</sup> The Shrine abovenamed belongs to the descendants of this disciple who are related to myself, the writer of this book. The village is reputed to be unaffected by cobra-poison, for Rāmānuja is Śeṣha.

simha, in the outskirts of the village. And here also, it is chronicled, Rāmānuja prayed fervently to Lord Srinivāsa of Tirupati to put an end to the cruel Parāntaka or the Chōla king and heretic, his tormentor, persecutor and the declared enemy of the Srīvaishnava faith. It would appear that this intense invocation to the Deity produced its effect inasmuch as Chōla found a carbuncle—the king's evil—forming on the nape of his neck, festering with worms, and eventually killing him after much torment. Hence he is known as *Krivikēṇṭha Chōla*, or *worm-necked Chōla*.

Rāmānuja now left Sāṅgrāma and proceeded eastwards to Tondanūr, which seems to have been then the capital or a capital outpost of the Hoysala Ballāḷa kings of the Jain persuasion ruling at Dvāra-samudra or Halēbid.<sup>1</sup> Vithala-Deva-Rāya was the name of the ruling king and he had his head quarters at the time, at Tondanūr.<sup>2</sup> He had a daughter whom an unclean spirit had taken possession. The king had called many physicians and magicians to treat her, but it was all in vain, and he was very grieved. There was a good man in the town by name Tondanūr-Namba, who lived by alms. He used to frequent the palace, and one day finding the queen, Sāntala-Dēvi<sup>3</sup> in grief, asked her the cause thereof. She explained that it was due to the condition in which her daughter was found, who even shamelessly ran about the streets naked, and did other antic things, all in consequence of the devil which had entered into her. T Nambi said. "Noble Queen, may I tell you that a great and holy man, by name Rāmānuja, has arrived at our town. I have become his disciple, and I have learnt that he once treated a similar case to that of your daughter, and succeeded in delivering a princess from an evil spirit—a *Brāhma-sakāṣa*.<sup>4</sup> If you will get him

<sup>1</sup> Vide Rice's Gazetteer of Mysore.

<sup>2</sup> Known now as Tondūr, about 16 miles north of Mysore on the way to Melakote. Even as late as 1316 A.C. the kings used to retire to Tondanūr. [Pp 241-2 Vol. I Rice's "Mysore Gazetteer."]

<sup>3</sup> See p. 41 Intro'd Rice's "Balegula Inscriptions."

<sup>4</sup> See pages 41, 42.

to see your daughter with his gracious eyes, I have hopes of a speedy cure for her." The queen was overjoyed at this revelation and communicated it at once to her royal spouse. He said—"Lady, if Rāmanuja will cast the devil out of our daughter and restore her to a sense of shame, we shall fall at his feet and accept him as our guru."

In the meanwhile, the king intended to give a feast to his caste-men, the Jainas who abounded in the country. The queen however warned her husband thus:—"Lord, thou givest a feast no doubt, but thy castemen, the Jainas will reject thy invitation on the score that thou art wanting in a finger of thy hand." "How can they dare refuse a king's invitation?" said the king irritated, and consulted his kinsmen about it. They said,—"King, the Turashka<sup>1</sup> emperor of Delhi, captured thee and thy country; and set a mark on thee to show that thou hadst lost thy independence and sovereignty, by depriving thee of a finger. But our custom does not allow us to eat in the house of a finger-less man. Dost thou forget thou art called *Bitti-deva*, "or the finger-Lord? We refuse to eat in thy house." This greatly incensed the king and he vowed vengeance against them.

The queen approached Bitti-deva and said:—"Lord, why art thou concerned thus? What care we for our kinsmen? Let us disassociate ourselves from their community and join the Yashnava ranks by becoming disciples of Rāmanuja. Hast thou forgotten what our Nambi told us about him? And is not our mad daughter also to be set right?" "Well said, we shall at once send for Rāmanuja," said Bitti-deva, and sent out men to invite Rāmanuja to his palace. But when the men delivered their message to Rāmanuja, who had camped outside the town limits, he told them that he would not plant his foot in kings' cities. Nambi was there at the time. He rose and falling before Rāmanuja, pleaded thus:—"Holy Sir, we beseech thee not to be so determined, but enter the king's house.

<sup>1</sup> Or Turk, a general name for all foreign invaders, except the Yavanas and the Keringhetas. Read A Barth's *Religions of India* P. 211.

<sup>2</sup> Converted into Sanskrit as *Vijñāna-deva*.



He will be an invaluable gain to our faith. Melukote or Tiru-Nārāyaṇa-puram,<sup>1</sup> about which thou hast been dreaming, is situate in this king's dominions. Thy desire is to restore this old and forgotten place of worship. To do this we want a king to espouse the cause. So we earnestly pray thee not to reject the king's overtures. Enter his house and shower on him thy graces." Rāmānuja was won by this persuasion and immediately made his entry into the city and the king's mansion. Bith-deva was elated with joy, and as the holy sage advanced, he ran to him and threw himself at his feet. Rāmānuja made kind inquiries, and entering the royal apartments was told the sad plight in which the king's daughter was. He commanded his disciples to have the girl brought before him and sprinkle her with the water made holy by the washing of his feet. This they did. And lo, the evil spirit left her, she was no more demented but returned to a sense of shame, ran into the inner apartments and shrouding herself in garments, returned and fell before Rāmānuja, saying "Holy Saint, thou art no ordinary mortal. Thou art a celestial being descended from heaven. Else I should not have recovered. Praise be to thee. I bow to thee." Vittala-deva was simply carried out of himself on witnessing these miracles, and needless to say, at once became a disciple of Rāmānuja, and devoted himself to his service for ever. Rāmānuja bestowed on him the name of Vishnu-Vardhana-Rāya.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Rāmānuja knew of this from the *Edils naru Mādāḍiṁṁ* contained in the *Hydras* and the *Matsya Purāṇas*.

<sup>2</sup> The Indian Antiquary Vol. II. May 1873 quotes a passage from Śrāvana. Brāhṇa. Śūbhakarāra thus "In Śaka year 1038. Durmakūṭi (=1117 A. C.). Bṛṅga-vardhana, under the taints of his favourite concubines<sup>(3)</sup> and the arguments of Rāmānujāchārya, received Tapta-mudrā (mark of religion) and thus became a convert to the Vaiṣṇava religion. He then changed his name to Vishnu-vardhana, and with a bitter hatred against this (Jaina) religion, discontinued or abolished

all the *śrāṇas*, destroyed 790 Basti temples, and set up Peṭicā Nārāyaṇas, viz.—Cheunigi Nārāyaṇa at Bēṭṭa, Kirti Nārāyaṇa at Talakkoṇḍa, Vijaya Nārāyaṇa at Gadugu and Lakshmi Nārāyaṇa at Haradana-halli, transferring to these all the *śrāṇas* or *śrāṇas* that had formerly been given to the Basti temples. He built the tank at Tondanāru from the stones of the destroyed Basti temples and called it Tirumalaṅgāra. Having abolished different kinds of Jaina *śrāṇas* \* \* \* he established below the tank Tirumalaṅgāra *chātra* for the feeding of the Rāmānuja-kṛpā.

The Jains rose in revolt against Rāmānuja. It is said that a body of 12,000 of them marched to Rāmānuja, who had taken his abode in Lord Nṛsiṃha's temple at Tondanūr, and demanded of him that he should first argue with them on religion and philosophy, before he interfered with their king. Rāmānuja seeing this tremendous onslaught of an infuriated crowd, thought to himself thus — "In order to escape from lightning, I have courted thunder, fearing the scorpion. I have fallen a victim to the fangs of a cobra, breaking away from fetters, I have thrust myself into stocks. What is the way now?" Nambi, finding his guru thus embarrassed, said "Holy Sir, thou art no ordinary mortal. Is not it thy worth while at such a crisis to reveal thy true celestial nature? May not all men realise thy greatness and be saved?" Rāmānuja, saying "let it be so then," retired into an ante-chamber in the temple, and commanding a curtain to be hung up between him and the crowd, became a thousand-headed serpent,<sup>1</sup> and argued with the Jaina disputants in a thousand ways, vanquishing them completely. This incident is memorialized to this day by means of a painting of Rāmānuja, overshadowed by the thousand heads of Śeṣha, on a wall in the Nṛsiṃha temple, existing to this day in good repair in Tonda-

(Continued) foot note on page 181.

He gave the name of Mēlakōṭa and Tirunāriyaṇṇaram to the village of Doddaguruganahalli, constructed several temples and places, and caused steps to be erected to the hill of Mēlakōṭa.<sup>2</sup> According to the Belūr inscription: Nārāyaṇa Pratiśṭhā took place in \* 1029. B (1117

A. C). So Rāmānuja must have lived for not less than 20 years in the Mysore country. Madaliyāḍān (Māreṭhi) was deputed to Belūr (=Velkṛam) to inaugurate Nārāyaṇa there. So sings the verse:—

விஞ்ஞபுத்தான்டரீன மெதூர்சொல்லிநீந்தருளி  
பஞ்சாசனாரீன பிரதிஷ்டாபனார்னி, காரணப்பநிதித்  
அஞ்சமென்று தன்வாழ்க்கை பலமுடையபதிருமாலைத்  
அஞ்சமவரன் ஈவரீன ஈந்திருமென்றுவழு.

[P : 218. Rāmānuja-Dīvyā-Charitam.]

<sup>1</sup> Rāmānuja being known as the Śeṣha-Śeṣha, is the Lakṣmīnārāyaṇa of Rāmānuja, and Balakṛmā of Mahā-Bhāgata [See p. xiv.—our *Thayered-gilt* with Rāmānuja's commentary.]

nār (called Chaturvedi-mangalam). Most of them embraced the Vaishṇava faith by becoming the disciples of Rāmanuja. Viśṇu-Vardhana, the king of the Poyala (Hoysala) country became more and more attached to Rāmanuja. Out of the materials of Jain temples pulled down, he got a tank constructed, intercepting the drainage of the river Yādava coming down from Mēlikōṭa or Yādavagiri, 10 miles to the north.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> A few notes bearing on these events may be of use in the reader.

(A) *Rice's Mysore Gazetteer* Vol. II, p. 274 [1897].—"Moti Talab" or lake of pearls, a large tank at Tenali in Seringapatna Taluk. It is formed by an embankment carried across a gap between two rocky hills, which stems the water of the Yādava tank, and other numerous torrents that there unite their streams. The mound, whose dimensions are given as 7½ miles high, 3000 yds and 2500 yds at the base, is said to have been constructed by Rāmanujāchārya, the Sri Vaiṣṇava Brāhman reformer, who had taken up his abode at the neighbouring town of Mēlikōṭa. He named the tank Tīrumanthagiri."

(B) *ibid.* Vol. I, p. 474. "He (Rāmanuja) then travelled over great part of Southern India, defeating and supplanting the Tālmāra crowd. He established numerous mathas, the principal one being at Shocana. He also converted or restored many Śiva temples to the worship of Viṣṇu, among others the celebrated temple of Tirupati. The Chola King Rājāraja Chōla, in whose dominion Sri Ranga was situated, was an ardent devotee of Śiva, and on Rāmanujāchārya's return to him after their religious conversion he was required in common with all the Brāhmanas to subscribe to a declaration of faith in Śiva. To escape persecution he fled to the Hoysala kingdom in Mysore. Here he received from the Jaina king the high honourable word known as Vāchavarthana, he was assigned to his court

being 1117 (?) Having put down the Jains by the severest measures, he acted under the royal favour and protection at Hoysala, and there established his throne, which is still occupied by the guru known as the Pāṇthāchārya. After two or three years, with the death of the Chola king he returned to Hoysala and there ended his days."

(C) *ibid.* Vol. I, p. 222. An important event to him (Rāmanuja) was his conversion from the Jain faith to that of Viṣṇu by the apostle Rāmanujāchārya, who had taken refuge in the Hoysala territory from the persecutions of the Chola king on his suppressing Śaiva. This step, accompanied by a change of his name to Viṣṇu-Vardhana, by which he in principle became a Vaishṇava, is about 1117 (?) Different reasons are given for it. One is that he had a daughter who was possessed the Jain faith unable to effect her conversion and undertaken by Rāmanuja, who cast out the evil spirit and further in mysterious ways of power disputation refuted the Jaina and converted them of hoysala; those who after this would not convert being executed in all malice (?) Another reason is, that the king had a Vaishṇava wife who, by suggestion of Rāmanuja, hinted to him that the Jaina priests were so haughty they would not even accept food in his hands. He was indignant at the idea and required to put it to the proof. Now the king had lost a finger a malice that will prevent the Jain priests from coming with him. When, therefore,

(Continued) foot note on page 123.

he found himself dishonoured by a refusal of his invitation, he went over in resentment to the other side, and abandoned the Jains to persecution. Rāmānaja demolished nearly all the Jain temples at the capital, said to have been 720 in number, and used the stones in embanking the large tank."

(D) *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 295. "On 28 Subsequently, about 1117, (?) Rāmānājāchārya, the celebrated apostle of the Vaishnavite sect, on fleeing from Dravida to avoid a confession of faith prescribed by the Chola Raja to be made by all his subjects, which was to establish the superiority of Śiva over Viṣṇu, took refuge in the Mysore country, where he succeeded in converting from the Jain faith the powerful Hoysala king, Bitti Deva, thenceforth known as Viṣṇuvardhana. This royal convert conferred on his apostle and his followers the tract of country on each side of the river Kāveri at Srirangapatna, known by the name of Aṣṭagrāma or eight townships, over which he appointed his own officers under the

ancient designations of Prabhuṣ and Hebbāra."

(E) *Rice's Scramas Belgola Inscriptions* (No. 53), P. 45. — (Santala-Dēvi, Queen of Viṣṇuvardhana). "Some details are also given of her family, from which it appears that her father was the senior preggade Narasinga, a Śaiva, while her mother was Māchikabbe, a devoted Jain. The conflict between her own position as a Jain and as the queen of the now Vaiṣṇava monarch Viṣṇu-vardhana is recalled by the statement that Jinandtha was her favourite and Viṣṇu her God."

*Rice's Mysore Gazetteer* Vol. II, P. 252. — "Belur, in the Purāṇas and ancient inscriptions, bears the name of Velapura and Velur, and is styled the Dakṣiṇa Vārāṇasī or Southern Benares. Its sanctity is due to the celebrated temple of Chenna-Kaṁava, erected and endowed by the Hoysala King Viṣṇuvardhana, on the occasion of his exchanging the Jain faith for that of Viṣṇu, in the beginning of the 12th century."

## CHAPTER XXIX

## MĒLUKOTE OR ŚRĪ-NĀHĀYANAPURAM.

Rāmānuja was thus employed. He not only expounded the profound truths of the Vedānta in Nṛsiṃha's temple at Tondanār, but with those truths converted thousands of alien faiths to the royal road of Vedāntic Vaiṣṇavism. While thus employed he ran short of Tirumaa,<sup>1</sup> or the holy white earth, with which Śrivaishnavas are required to illumine their foreheads. To go without this distinguishing mark<sup>2</sup> is the greatest misfortune to Śrī Vaiṣṇavas. Naturally therefore Rāmānuja was much concerned. He had a dream in which Lord Śrī-Nārāyaṇa of Mēlukote appeared and spoke thus —“I am very near thee, Rāmānuja, on the Yadugiri hill, awaiting thy arrival, and there thou shalt have thy Tirumaa<sup>3</sup> also as well. Come soon.” Rāmānuja awoke and related his wonderful dream to all his comrades, and sending for Vṛṣṇa-Vardhana, the king, delivered to him the message. The king marvelled and immediately ordered gangs of men to clear the forests in the direction indicated by Rāmānuja, and as Rāmānuja advanced, the king devoutly followed him behind. Steadily progressing thus, they arrived at the foot of the Yadugiri hill, and ascend-

<sup>1</sup> Some notes from Rieu's *Épigraphie Carnatake* Vol. III. p. 20, are here added: “—Inscription 80 Br. records the grant of the title to the sacred earth at Mēlukote, which, it is said, was discovered by Embarmānār, or Eśānupādhārya, the great Vaiṣṇava reformer. It is a fine white clay or decayed schistose mica, which is used by the Vaiṣṇava Brāhmaṇas for making the udāsa or sectarian marks on their foreheads, and is in such demand for this purpose, on account of its purity that it is transported to distant places, even as far as Benares. It is said to have been brought to Mēlukote by Garuṁṁṁ, the bird of Viṣṇu, from Sveta-dvīpa in the Kālikramanodra or milk ocean.

<sup>2</sup> Some Vaiṣṇavas wash it by

digging the whole substance out of the beds in which it lies, and throwing it into large vessels of water, it is stirred about, and while the mica swims, the fragments of quartz remain at the bottom and are taken out by the hand. The mica is then allowed to subside and forms into a mass which is divided into small pieces, and afterwards made into laths by being moistened in water. These are sold for use, and are perfectly white” [Bachana, I. 245].

<sup>3</sup> Cp. (a) “We sign the servants of God in their foreheads” [Rev. 7. 3].

(b) “Which have met the seal of God in their foreheads” [Rev. 9. 4].

(c) “I have his Father's name written in their foreheads” [Rev. 14. 1].

ing it, arrived at the fountain called Vēdipushkarinī, and sighting the holy slab, (*paridāśasāla*), where of yore Dattatreya had worn his ascetic robes, Rāmanuja bathed in the fountain and laying aside Kārēṣa's white robes, worn when leaving Srirangam, put on his colored ascetic robes. The date of entry into Yadagiri is chronicled as the Bahudhānya year, in the month of Tā (or about 1090 A. C., or when Rāmanuja was about 80 years of age).<sup>1</sup> From the Vēdipushkarinī, they silently walked forward in search of where Lord Nārāyaṇa (i. e., His statue) lay hidden. They failed that day to find the place. Rāmanuja however saw in a vision vouchsafed to him that He lay covered up in an ant-hill, between a Champaka and a Vakula tree on either side, and to the south-west corner of the Kalyāṇī pond, and that the ant-hill was overgrown with the sacred basil. He also saw that the place where *śrimeṣa* was deposited lay to the north-west corner of the same Kalyāṇī-pond, and he also heard as if Nārāyaṇa telling him that fragments of basil leaves would be strewn along the path which lay between Rāmanuja and the places indicated. Rāmanuja awoke from his reverie and followed the directions given. This led to Kalyāṇī, and thence on to the ant-hill. This was covered with basil as prophesied. Rāmanuja was transported with joy and prostrating himself before the place, removed the earth, and lo, the statue of Nārāyaṇa was found underneath. Inexpressible joy animated the devout band who were privileged to be present on this most auspicious and blissful occasion, and the divine sight re-intoxicated them that they deviously danced, chanted praises, sent forth peals of hand-clappings and ejaculations, and with king Viṣṇu-vardhana in their midst, celebrated the occasion with a blast of trumpets and a beat of tom-toms and a burst of instrumental and other music—all, a united outburst and demonstration of the intense spiritual glow in which they had become enveloped by an event, the most unusual and extraordinary in the annals of mankind. Pails of milk were brought and emptied over the Holy Statue

<sup>1</sup> Mr Rice puts 1117 A. C., as the year of Hittu Deva's conversion. This must be wrong. Bahudhānya tallies with 1090, A. C., when Rāmanuja was exactly 81 years of age.

followed by a detail of ritual prescribed by the *Pañcharātra* *Sāstra*. Rāmānuja himself personally worshipped the Deity for three days, and Nārāyaṇa was thus reinstalled after ages of oblivion, and the decad of St. Nammāshvār, beginning with *Oru-adyakam* [Tiruvāymozhi, v-1], was dedicated to this God, inasmuch as Rāmānuja was the rightful inheritor of all the spiritual wealth of the apostles preceeding him,<sup>1</sup> and was thus the authority to interpret forgotten traditions.

Rāmānuja next proceeded to the north-west corner of the Kalyāṇi-pond, and made a furrow on the ground with his holy staff. It revealed white beads of clay, and thus was another act of his vision realised, to the marvel of all present. Rāmānuja thus obtained the holy earth he wanted, (described in the beginning of this Chapter), with which he signed himself on the twelve parts of the body prescribed, and to his great delectation.

The jungle over the summit of the Melukōṭṭa (Yādavagiri) hill was cleared away, streets were aligned, rows of houses built, a temple erected for Lord Nārāyaṇa over the ant-hill, and a series of festivals, monthly, annual and so on were instituted. But an *utsava* (processional) image was wanting—an image cast of a compound of five select metals in fixed proportions. But this was difficult of accomplishment, and Rāmānuja fell to musing deeply as to how this difficulty was to be overcome. He was again given a vision, in which Nārāyaṇa appeared to him and spoke thus —“ Rāmānuja, our moveable representative is alive, named Rāmapriya, which is now in Delhi with the Turk Emmāda Rāya. Proceed there and bring it. Rāmānuja accordingly made preparations and journeyed all the way to Delhi and there meeting the Rāya or king, prevailed upon him to grant his request. The Turk king gave orders that Rāmānuja be taken to the apartments where his plundered treasures were hoarded. There were many idols, but Rāmānuja failed to find among them Rāmapriya, and he fell into a reverie as he

<sup>1</sup> Read verse *விந்த குருக்களது* [Rāmānuja's teachers by Anandāshvār or Anantavīri.]

pondered how to trace it. He was given a dream in which Rāmapriya appeared and said—"I am with the daughter of the king. She has made a plaything of me. To her dallyings and caresses, I am a living person. Come there and find me." Rāmānuja awoke and reported to the king that the idol he sought was with the Sultān. The king's curiosity was roused at the revelations, a foreign Sanyāsin of a different persuasion was making to him, and not only curiosity but respect and adoration for the holy saint. The King took the Sanyāsin Rāmānuja into the seraglio, where no other man dared enter, and wonderful to relate, Rāmapriya was there found, fondled by the Sultān, his daughter, to whom He played the husband. Rāmānuja, entering, called Him by His name, and lo, the Image jumped down from the couch on which the Sultān had placed Him, and walked to where Rāmānuja stood, in all the glory and grace of an incarnated deity, embellished according to all the ideals of taste natural to Āryan imagination. Rāmānuja embraced the advancing Divine Beauty with all the fondness of a parent finding his long-lost son, and in commemoration of the discovery, called him by the endearing name of *Seiva-p-pilai*, which in Sanskrit is *Sampatkumāra*, by which name the Image is still called. The king, who witnessed all this procedure was simply astounded beyond measure, and loading Rāmānuja with gifts and honors, sent him back from the scene of his holy mission.

The daughter Sultān would not bear the separation from the, to her, living doll. She wanted it back for herself. But the father said: "It is their god, daughter, how can we claim Him?" "Then," cried the Sultān passionately to her father: "Send me with my God." "Most cheerfully," said the father, and allowed her to depart with untold wealth and other things, telling Rāmānuja—"Holy hermit, thy God goes not alone, but with a wife as well—a precious wife. I consign her to thy care." Rāmānuja proceeded with his Divine treasure, and reached Yādavagiri in due time. Here he inaugurated *Sampat-kumāra* in all ceremony, and instituted all the festivals which must be celebrated throughout the year, with the necessary establishment to conduct them for all time to







[In the stupendous work involved in the institution of this Holy Shrine, and the, in those days, hard journeys to distant countries which had consequently to be undertaken, the Pañchamas or the Pariahs or those low-caste Hindus who are relegated to a place in the Hindu Society beyond the pale of the law-sanctioned *Chatur-varṇya* (i.e., the four constituted members of the Hindu polity, the Brāhmaṇa, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya and Śūdra), were, so says our tradition, of great help to Sri Rāmānuja. He gave them the title of "Tirukkulattār" or the Blessed Descendants," and further allowed them the privilege of entering into the Holy Temples to certain limits, viz., the outer gate near the altar (*Dhvaja-Stambha*, or *Bali pitha*), this practice remaining in force even up to this day, in the Temples of Srirangam, Melukote, and Belur (Hassan District). They are allowed to bathe in the Holy Ponds attached to the Temples, to which on other days than those allowed, this privilege is strictly disallowed; and the highest class, viz., the Brāhmaṇas, cannot during the privileged days allotted to the Tiruk-kulattārs, complain of contamination when they may chance to rub shoulders with each other in the holy streets. Rāmānuja opened the doors of religious instructions for these classes, as well as certain modes of ritual and other privileges peculiar to Sri-Vaiṣṇavas, such as the Pañcha-Samskāra or the Five Holy Vaiṣṇava Sacraments. It is thus evident how seriously had Rāmānuja bethought of elevating the low-classes as regards their eligibility for salvation. Rāmānuja had already confirmed too in his own days, what his predecessors had ordained, viz., the enshrinement of saints in the Temples, to whatever caste they might belong.<sup>1</sup>]

<sup>1</sup> Read St. Tiruppuṭi Āṭvār's life in the Lives of Drāviḍa Saṃmata.

Recently a Pandal was erected in Bangalore bearing the inscription "Tirukkulattār," to greet Their Royal Highness (5th February 1906), and the following remarks were recorded by the Hindu of this date — " \* \* \* nothing is of greater historical interest than the word Tirukkulattār. \* \* \* When Sri Rāmānujāchārya, the

Immortal founder of the Vaiṣṇava sect, went to Melukote in the Mysore Province, the Pariahs made themselves so useful to that sage that he felt for their hard lot. To elevate them socially he gave them the name of Tirukkulattār, which means people of high or noble descent. His great aim was to abolish the word Pariah and thus to put a stop to the degradation of a section of the people of this country. He

Rāmānuja also established a sect of his at Yata-naila, called the Yatirāja-math, where a Sanyāsi is always to live and manage the affairs of the Pāṇi. The building still exists intact, and the monastery has had a line of illustrious successors to this day. An old banyan tree still lives in it.

During the time Rāmānuja was so installed in his high pontificate, he is said to have gone to Padmagiri,<sup>1</sup> and engaged

**Foot note on page 191 (continued).**

also awarded to them the rare and valued privilege of visiting the temple at Mathura three days in the year. Thus the emancipation of the Pariah commenced long ago, and if it has not been yet accomplished the cause is not solely the absence of consideration for the cause on the part of some of the more illustrious founders of religions in this India. Though at the present day the followers of Śrī Rāmānujachariar form probably the most exclusive among the Brahman community, still the fact remains that the founders of the sect laboured for the elevation of the depressed and despised classes. . . . the honored name of Yārukkūṭai carries us back to those good old days when the practice and the

preaching of religion meant really the elevation of men, and the granting of merits considered it a part of their duty to minister to the religious cravings of the lowliest classes of people."

In those days we have the spectacle of a Mīrāṇḍa a Mahāmuni, who has embraced Vaishnavism, and in performing Hariharacharya all over the country and of a Chenchuḍiā (a Yārukkūṭai) a Kōlar (Kēṇṇa Pāṇi) who is working for the religious elevation of his class, by establishing temples, Mūṭhis and Śhāyana kōṭas, and to whom his spiritual guru of Yārukkūṭai, has delegated the privilege to administer himself to his men the Paṇḍa-ṇaṇḍāra sacrament and receive from them the Paṇḍa-kāṇḍāra.

<sup>1</sup> The Buddhists and Jains are grouped together in the one category of *asat Yodis*. But Buddhists seem to be the first who came to Kāśī followed by the Jains as the Prācīna Religion (inscriptions, by Śrī, vol. II. Padmagiri appears to be one of the names of this place). The following extract is from Śrī's *Brahma Inscriptions*—[P. 27]. "We now come to a series of inscriptions connected with Ganga Raja. The first of them are the last lines in Nos. 75 and 76, which state, in Jaina, Mahāyāna, and Hala Kāvya respectively that Ganga Raja had the enclosure or *dharmāraṇḍa* (with *dharmāraṇḍa*) made for the solemn *dharmāraṇḍa* of *dharmāraṇḍa*. The inscriptions

are on either side the image, immediately below those of Chāṇḍaḍa Raja, and in characters so arranged. Their date, by the reasons already given (p. 23) is fixed as A.D. 1116. The erection of this enclosing parapet walls and other buildings around has certainly detracted from the imposing and picturesque effect the gigantic image must previously have presented when stood as alone in its naked solemnity in the summit of the hill. It is probably the walls were not required for its protection from 1116. For when it was erected the Jains were in the ascendancy, and Jainism was the state religion. It is with the same reference to the Vaishnav faith of

there with the Bauddhas is a philosophical controversy. He succeeded in vanquishing the atheists, and owing to a wager made evidently by them that, in the event of defeat they would submit themselves to be ground in an oil-mill<sup>1</sup> in case they were not willing to become adherents to the new faith they seem to have been allowed to undergo the self-imposed punishment.

**Foot note on page 192 (continued).**

the Royals king Bhis Deva (sometimes called Vishnu Vardhana) is probably this very year by the reference Rāmānujacharya, great animosity was excited against the Jainas, albeit they were too powerful to be altogether set aside. There are two stories of Rāmānujacharya's hatred against the image, was so cruel as an object of worship. No trace remains of such injury unless it be that the forefinger of the left hand which is shorter than it should be, had a piece struck off below the first joint and was afterwards reattached to a perfect finger again. This particular form of revenge would easily have suggested itself if it be true, as we read, one states that the change of the king's religion was in some degree brought about by the refusal of his Jaina guru to take food with him because the king was mutilated, having lost one of his fingers.

As for the grinding in oil-mill, this seems to have been a stock punishment, either true or an allegory to express the total overthrow of the disputants in wordy war. Such oil-milling and grinding were common as between Buddhists and

Jains, and Jains and Bauddhas. (Vol. p. 15. *Maas Brahmasamita*, inscription and p. 471 Vol. I. *Rice's Mysore Gazette* Nov. 1, 1907 is the last Kameśa having ground Bauddhas and Jains together. If this was correct 1900, then we have parallels in Jesus Christ, of whom we are thus told in the *Epiphany*, p. 14, Jan. 24, 1913 Vol. XII *Calcutta*: "The hands that worked loving muscles of mercy, lifted also the lash of cords, to scourge the scorifiers and the covetous out of the temple courts. Terrific words issued from those lips so full of grace."

Depart ye covered into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels. Such were some of the sayings of the incarnate Love of God. Arrogant, uncharitable, which those who seek to emancipate that Character into an "Oriental Christ," destitute of everything but a weak tolerant benevolence, are fain to ignore or obscure, as scarcely to be fitted into their imagined scheme of human perfection. So that Rāmānuja is not to be mistaken for one who was also crucified along with the one grinding stone.

## CHAPTER XXX

## CHOLA'S PERSECUTIONS.

Twelve years, it is written, did Rāmānuja stay in the Mairar Country, with his head-quarters at Sri Varayanapura (Mēlukōta). All this time he had no news of what events transpired at Srirangam, which he had left owing to the Sivite king Kṛmikantha-Chola's persecutions. Now a Sri Vaishnava arrived, and fell with his face flat before Rāmānuja. Raising him, Rāmānuja eagerly inquired — "Is all going on well with Lord Ranga and all His holy affairs?" "All is well, Sir," said he, "save that you are very much missed." "But," asked Rāmānuja with a fluttering heart, "how did Kûrēṣa and Mahāpārma fare, who were forced to appear before the apostate Chola?" "Sure," he began, "the two good men, as you are aware, were taken to Chola's presence, and Chola commanded them to set their signatures to the written declaration *No higher being than Śiva exists*. But Kûrēṣa poured out before him voluminous authorities from the Vedas, Upanishads, Smṛitis and Purāṇas, proving that Nārāyaṇa was the Highest God, being the Cause of the cosmos, as also its Author for creation, sustention, and dissolution, and therefore the only Object of worship and contemplation, and that Chatur-mukha Brahmā and Rudra were respectively His son and grandson, and cited other verses to demonstrate his position.<sup>1</sup> But Chola after all said in angry tones — "Look here, thou art indeed a very clever person, and therefore capable of interpreting authoritative texts to suit thy own preconceived prejudices. I will not hear all this. Here is my circular containing the statement '*There is no higher than Śiva*.' I command thee to sign it without another word of protest." Kûrēṣa took the paper, but before attaching his signature thereto, wrote —

<sup>1</sup> Two are cited here for the use of our readers —

एकः प्रसीतस्तथा कथं नृणां विमुक्तम् ।

असौ दीपस्तूर्वा लोचिस्तन्मुखस्तथा ॥ (K-rishna)

कथं नृणां विमुक्तस्तथा नरोदकेन दीपस्तूर्वा लोचिस्तन्मुखस्तथा ॥

अनुरूपं नृणां विमुक्तस्तथा नरोदकेन दीपस्तूर्वा लोचिस्तन्मुखस्तथा ॥

[Śhāgavata. 111. 29-33.]

'*Dronam asti tatah param,*' and then signed his name under it. The meaning of this passage is "But *drona* is higher than *that*." This, and "*Sirāt parataram adats,*" meaning 'there is no higher than *Siva*,' together make a couplet in Sanskrit verse. Taken together, they read — "There is no higher than *Siva*, but *Drona* is higher than *that* (*Siva*)."<sup>1</sup> By this *Kūrma* implicated a pun on the terms *Siva* and *Drona*, *Siva* meaning a small measure, and *Drona*, a greater measure. This play on words was taken as a slight and affront which necessarily threw the king into a rage, who exclaimed "Pull out the eyes of this daring jester!" "But," exclaimed *Kūrma* in return, "thou needst not take that trouble, tyrant, I will do that act with my own hands, for my eyes ought not to remain after seeing a sinner like thyself!" A martyr to the cause of Vaishnavism, *Kūrma*, so saying, gouged out his eyes, striking terror into all who witnessed this blood-curdling scene. The cruel king now turned to the venerable old *śāchrya Mahāpūrṇa*, and cried — "Now, Sir, will you sign this circular or no?" *Pūrṇa* said he could not, supporting his refusal by citations from various scriptures. On this, the king commanded his myrmidons to catch the dissenter and pluck out his eyes. This cruelty having been inflicted the king drove the two martyrs out of his palace.

Blood streamed out of the eye-less cavities of old *Pūrṇa*, and the poignant agony consequent may be better imagined than described. *Pūrṇa*'s daughter *Attushāyāmmā* had followed the martyrs unobserved. When they emerged from the palace with gore dripping and drenching their persons, she ran to them, and leading them by their hands, passed out of sight, and comforted and consoled them as best as she could, wiping their bloody faces, bathing with water, and thus doing her best to stop the blood and alleviate their terrible sufferings. *Kārma* was middle-aged, and had besides a strong will, which he further strengthened by the reflection — "Ah, God, what grace of Thine indeed that thou hast chosen me as Thy vessel to give eye for

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<sup>1</sup> For other particulars of conversation, see Topic 161, in our Divine Wisdom of Dravida Saints, p. 118.





"O man, you have a corpse, and we help those who are abandoned by all, as you evidently are." Kūrēsa cried — "Sure, God is with us, so proceed on your way and succour those who are really abandoned. These searches, then, after *andha-pretas* (helpless corpses) went their way. And now turned up suddenly Srivaishnavas, people of Kūrēsa's own faith, by the help of whom he cremated Pārtha by the special rite called the *Brakma-mātha*.

Kūrēsa was now gently led to a shelter, and after resting there for a while, after the tremendous trials he had undergone, was brought to Srirangam by night-marches to elude pursuit by the king's emissaries, if he still did intend to persecute the fugitives. Kūrēsa was spending weary days lamenting over what had happened, and grieving that he was denied the privilege of dying with the veteran Mahāpūrta.

One day, Kūrēsa desired to visit Lord Ranga, for the first time after the chapter of disastrous events related above. Being blind, he slowly groped his way to the shrine. But king Chola had strictly decreed by his royal mandate that none should be allowed to enter it, who was a follower of Rāmānuja. When then Kūrēsa was about to step into the Temple, the guards said — "Sure, our orders are strict. No one belonging to Rāmānuja are to be admitted. But you are a good man *par excellence*, and so we make of you an exception. Enter, but pray make an avowal that you have seceded from Rāmānuja." On hearing this, Kūrēsa closed his ears and said — "Good guards, what have I heard? If I have to secede from Rāmānuja, and recant as you wish, I had better give up this God Ranga. Without Rāmānuja, no God exists for me." So saying, Kūrēsa groped his way back, bent with grief, and fell on the ground weeping, uttering, in despairing tones, the holy verses of *śruti*s. Soon after, he left Srirangam, with his two children, to Thirumāhruṅjola (near Madura) to spend his days there in grief and solitude.

Such was the narrative given by the guest who had arrived at Melukote from Srirangam. Rāmānuja listened to the bitter tale, which was to him like molten lead poured into his ears.

With difficulty he suppressed his rising emotions, and at last, containing himself no longer, burst into a passion of grief, dropped on the ground like a felled tree and rolled in the dust, wetting it with his burning tears. His disciples gathered round him and did their best to console him. And he reigned himself at last, thanking God that Kūrēṣa at least was alive, whom thus he had yet a chance to see, though the thought of the loss of his eyes was to him unbearable.

Mahāpūrṇa, being his Guru, all the sacraments to be celebrated after death were duly performed such as *Sri-śāstrā-paripāṭana*, and memorial verses<sup>1</sup> were dedicated to him.

Rāmanuja's heart was wrung with agony. He called M. M. Āṇḍān<sup>2</sup> to his side, and directed him to proceed to Srirangam, carrying condolences and a budget of news to Kūrēṣa, and return with all the intelligence of that place, and engaged himself more vigorously than ever in prolections on the Vedānta which he delivered to his devoted audiences.

About this time, Goswthi-pūrṇa, one of the Gurus of Rāmanuja, also died. His disciples gathered round him and asked him what were his thoughts in his last moments. He said he was thinking of his Guru Yāmunāchārya, and the meaning of his verse:—

एषुवरकदपूरत्वंतारशोकवसस्व पश्यतः। त्विदंवाङ्मूर्खैरचैक्यवदृष्टम् ।

प्रतिमममरान्दुर्गुणैस्तुङ्गवदौपूर्यदकिमपदकालस्तत्पतेर्द्विजपादाः ॥

'O Rāma Great, who forgave the miscreant Kāka!

O Krishna Great, who forgave the miscreant Chaitya!

How can my sin persist against such grace of Thine!

So saying Pūrṇa died. And Terk-Āzhvār, his son, performed

<sup>1</sup> कथयति कल्याणगुणानृतनिवेदया ।

पूर्वैकाग्र्यमसततं पूर्वाग्र्यमहतेनसः ॥

आचार्येणामुनेयारभितनिमयान्तायैज्ञातंभवति

श्रोतुमिच्छतइत्यनयिमानिपदेत्येकैकतद्वचनार्थम् ।

चोचंनृपायचोक्तकालसिद्धिपुत्रान्प्रापतिर्निर्णीतम् ।

हरीपुत्रतद्वत्तद्विज्ञानमहममरैरनृषापूर्वैकार्यम् ॥

<sup>2</sup> Full name — *Mer-savillā-Māruṭ-g-āṇḍān*.

all the funeral ceremonies. Memorial verses were dedicated to him.<sup>1</sup>

Tirumālai-Andān<sup>2</sup>, Tiru-v-aranga-p-perumāl-Araiyaṣ, <sup>3</sup> Sri-Eaḷa-pūrṇa, <sup>4</sup> and Kāñchi-pūrṇa, <sup>5</sup> the other gurus of Rāmānuja also soared to the Eternal Regions, at this time ; and memorial verses were dedicated to them as custom demanded.

Thus ends a black chapter.<sup>6</sup>

[It is chronicled of Kāñchi-pūrṇa that it was a very dark night at the close of a day, when he had finished his services to Lord Varada, and had to go home. A torch-bearer by name Arulālan attached to the Temple was found on the premises. Pūrṇa begged of him to conduct him back to his retreat lighting the dark way with his torch. But he excused himself saying he was much tired that day, and slipped away, to sleep snug in a corner. Pūrṇa thought he would find his way in the pitch-dark night as best as he could ; but hardly had he crossed the threshold of the Temple-gate, when there was found a torch-bearer with his torch, ready to conduct him home. Pūrṇa was glad that the man had kindly changed his mind for his sake. The next morning, however, when Pūrṇa came to the Temple to do the round of his duties, the torch-bearer ran towards

- <sup>1</sup> ज्ञानदमगुरुपूर्णे सन्तुनार्यसंस्तुतम् ।  
अभिगतपरमार्थे ज्ञानानन्दमादिस्मृतम् ।  
सतिपतितपादं श्लोकतन्त्रार्थनिष्ठम्  
चित्तपुरितहरस्तंगतिपूर्णेनमामि ॥  
सन्तुनार्यपदाम्भोज धीमन्त्यमृतसगरम् ।  
धीमद्गोक्षीपुत्रीपूर्णे देशिकेन्द्रमजामहे ॥
- <sup>2</sup> रायानुजमुनीन्द्राय शशिदीपं हितार्थदम् ।  
मानाधरगुरुकन्दे कवदूर्कविगलितम् ॥
- <sup>3</sup> अन्धाययवतीन्धाय पराङ्मुखसहसिकम् ।  
नन्नायवश्यं वन्दे ईश्वरद्विधिरेशिकम् ॥
- <sup>4</sup> शिनामहस्यापि शितामहाय प्राचेनसदेहकञ्जपदम् ।  
श्रीभाष्यकारोत्तमदेशिकाय श्रीकैलपूर्वाय नमोनमस्तु ॥
- <sup>5</sup> कुरुवाकरपादाय सरस्वाय नमस्तुते ।  
श्रीमद्भक्तेश्वराय कञ्चीपूरुषिते नमः ॥

<sup>6</sup> " You they are gone, and round us, too, the night,  
Is ever-nearing circle weaves her shade." [Matthew Arnold.]

him, and with a look of great repentance, fell at his feet craving pardon for his refusal, the previous night, to light him home. Pūrṇa was taken aback at this demonstration, for he had had him actually the previous night. It now however flashed upon his mind that it must have been Lord Varada Himself after all (whose *saṃskṛta* name is Aruḍālan also), who had personated the torch-bearer. With joy babbling in his breast at this additional evidence of God's love for his humble votaries, he dismissed the real torch-bearer, of course forgetting him.<sup>1</sup>

[A tradition also has been handed down, with regard to Aruḍālan that he was the favorite of Kānchīpūrṇa, so much so that he daily received from the latter the remains of Varada-offered food in the temple, after having been eaten by him. One day Pūrṇa gave the food on a leaf to Aruḍālan. Somehow a leaf had found its way into one of the holy vessels with which food was offered to Lord Varada, and Pūrṇa was shown this. He identified it with the leaf he had given to Aruḍālan, and the latter, when asked, said he could not explain how it found its way into the shrine and into a holy vessel. Of course the temple-officials resolved to perform a great purificatory ceremony. But Lord Varada declared to them that he would brook no such ceremony, inasmuch as Aruḍālan was such a dear servant of his, and Pūrṇa was a sacred person, whose touch of the food and Aruḍālan's touch of it again made the leaf so holy that he would rather have the day's food served to him with the leaf. This was accordingly done and no purificatory ritual customarily binding, was gone through. It is said that Rāmānuja had come to learn the extraordinary sanctity of Pūrṇa and of all that concerned him and of the esteem in which Lord Varada held him, and that it was on this account Rāmānuja had been eager to partake of the food first taken by Pūrṇa. It was for this purpose, it may be remembered, that Rāmānuja invited Pūrṇa to his house, but he was thwarted in the design by the indiscretion of his wife—which has already been related on page 70.]

<sup>1</sup> This account fortuitously [a mistake I should say] fell into my hands on the day of my paying a chance visit to the Holy Shrine of Kōvūtūr (Tanjore District) on the 21st February 1908, vide *Prapnaṁ* Mēṭṭu (Tamil) dated Friday 17th February 1908.

## CHAPTER XXXI.

## RĀMĀNUJA'S RETURN TO ERĪRĀNGAM.

M. M. Āndān, who was despatched by Rāmānuja to Srīrangam, arrived there in due time and making obeisance to Kūrēṣa, announced himself to the now blind but heroic martyr. Kūrēṣa fell into ecstasy and looked upon Āndān as Rāmānuja himself arrived, and hurriedly asked, in anxious tremulous tones, how it was faring with Rāmānuja. Said Āndān.—“He is well enough, but his grief at what has happened here and especially at the loss of your eyes, is inconsolable. He has sent me to tender you his heart-felt sympathies.” “Good,” said Kūrēṣa, “but inform my master that so long as his life has been saved from the bigot Chola—a life which sustains the world—the loss of my eyes is of no account whatsoever.”

Intelligence arrived at this time that king Chola had died<sup>1</sup> of a carbuncle on his neck, festering with worms. Āndān, to make sure of this, journeyed to Gangai-konda-Sozhapuram (near Chidambaram?), and obtaining corroboration of the glad news, hurried on to Melukote, taking with him Ammaṅgi-ammāl, whom he met on his way.

In due course they arrived at Melukote, and finding Rāmānuja busy at the time bathing in the holy pond Kaiyān, fell before him, and shedding tears of joy, related to him the news of Chola's death. Rāmānuja was transported with joy at the death of the sworn enemy of his Faith, and raising up the two disciples, embraced them, himself shedding tears of joy and

<sup>1</sup> From inscriptions it is made out that Kulottunga Chola I or Vira-Chola or Bāṇa-Bajendra Chola's time was 1064 to 1113 A.C. And he is said to have died a few years earlier than Viśhnu Vardhana of

Hoyasala, who is found at Yādava-pura (Melukote) in 1125 A.C. (No. 16, Inscription, Mysore.) He is also known as Kṛishṇa-kāṇṇha and also Karikāla, as is seen in the verse:—

“பூப்பூத்துமதவன் படைத்தனமத்த  
புலிவயிரவன் தவதும் படைத்துத்  
கடபதுமென் கடனைதவத்த  
கரினவச்சோழனை வழுத்தினவெ.

[Kaṭiṅgaṭṭupparani.]

said:—“O faithful sons, how far indeed have you travelled, bearing so many hardships simply to carry me this joyful message! How can I sufficiently reward you? The best that I can give you is the Holy *Dvaya* mantra. Receive it. So saying he initiated them in the Holy Formula, and looking round to the group of followers who had surrounded him, addressed them thus.—“O my faithful, our bitterest foe is gone. Our faith has stood this most severe and crucial trial. This holy pond Kalyāṇi is really *kalyāṇi*, auspicious, and this Māruti Āṇḍan is really *māruti*, Haṁsumān.” “Yes,” all cried jubilantly. In a body they all mounted the sacred Hill of Lord Nṛsiṃha, rising from the edge of the pond. Prostrating himself before Nṛsiṃha, Rāmānuja praised him thus.—“O Slayer of Hiraṇya, of yore, even now hast thou slain Chola, the demon. Even as thou savedst thy devotee Prahlāda then, hast thou saved Kūrṅga now.” *Tirtha* and *prasaāda* were duly bestowed on Rāmānuja who thence descended the hill, and entering the adytum of Nārāyaṇa, asked leave of Him to return to Srirangam, now that his work was completed. Nārāyaṇa returned no answer for a long time, when Rāmānuja urged his request again:—“Almighty, Ranga’s command was that I should stay for ever in Srirangam. Owing to unexpected calamities, I was forced to leave the place. Now that all has been accomplished here, may I not return?” Lord Nārāyaṇa’s voice now came. “Be it so, then.”

Rāmānuja had established in Melukote, fifty-two officers (*Aṁbathṛuvār*) for the restored Pane of Nārāyaṇa. These magnates, hearing that Rāmānuja was about to leave them, fell at his feet weeping, and said:—“Holy Sire, how can we live without you?” Rāmānuja raised them up lovingly and brushing away their tears, said:—“Take heart, sons, I shall let an image be cast after my own likeness, and leave it here, filled with my power. It shall answer all your purposes. Further, I lay it on you all to take care of our *Sampat-kūmāra* brought from Delhi. He is like my son standing near the brink of a wall. Such is my love for Him. See to the proper discharge

<sup>1</sup> The messenger who brought him the joyful tidings of Riti.

of all the sacred functions connected with Nārāyaṇa's Temple. See that you do not cheat God of what is due to Him, or cheat each other. Remain ever firmly friendly to one another, and be not remiss in your loving services to God whom we have installed in this country."

Leaving besides a detailed code of temple-procedure, he left Mālukote, after passionate grief had been displayed, by him on the one hand at having to part from his beloved Sampat-kumāra and his disciples, and on the other hand by his disciples and all at having to part from their cherished master and possessor. Rāmānuja's progress thus from the Temple was very slow for some distance out of the town. He looked back at every step, drinking in with his eyes, the sight of the temple, its terraces, corridors, the streets, and the homesteads which had risen all round, and with a heart overflowing with kindness for all that he was going to leave behind. Nor would the townsfolk allow him to depart quietly. After he had gone some way forward, they waylaid him and cried,—"Sure, how can we be sure you are in your Image? Give us evidences, else you cannot leave us in bereavement." "Beloved men," said he, "return, and standing before my image, call me by my name." They ran back and did so. "Rāmānuja, our Lord", cried they. "Yes, I am here and for ever," came the voice from the Image. They were satisfied, and running back to Rāmānuja, fell before him and after a vehement outburst of grief and of gratitude, and consolation by Rāmānuja, he was allowed to bid adieu to them all.

In rapid marches,—love for Sampat-kumāra restraining him, but prospect of seeing Lord Ranga urging him forward—he arrived at the banks of Kaveri at Srirangam. He stopped there to bathe and decorate himself with the twelve holy marks and make other preparations before planting his foot on the sacred land. In the meanwhile, the magnates of Srirangam were apprised of his arrival. Their joy was indescribable. They all ran up to him in breathless excitement, and wel-

<sup>1</sup> Cp. "Far where there are two gathered in my name, there am I in the midst of them". [Mat. XVIII, 20]. "Behold I am with you all days, even to the consummation of the world" [Mat. XXV:11, 20].

came him back home with a salvo of greetings. After having been away for nearly twenty long years, he was now making triumphal entry in the midst of a seething crowd,—all eyes and hearts turned to him—after having undergone so many hardships and trials for the Faith. A ceremonial entry was made into the adytum of Ranga, with prostrations at every step. "Son," said the Lord, opening His mouth, "thou hast been away from Us far and long, sure thou must be very tired. "Merciful God," replied Rāmānuja, "while Thou art alive with Thy elect by Thy side, there is no fatigue to me or all the universe put together." Ranga was pleased and commanded tirtha and prasāda to be administered, and granted him leave to go and join his monastery and rest after his toils and trials.

But as Rāmānuja threaded his way round the streets of Srirangam, where he gladly witnessed the charming scenes which he had long missed, his thoughts were occupied with Kūrēṣa, and the first thing that he would, and did, do was to step into his dwelling. Of course blind Kūrēṣa, who had ere this returned from Tūmāḷirupolai (near Madura), was informed beforehand of his master's return, and as he heard Rāmānuja approach, rushed forward from his door, and prostrating himself, firmly clasped Rāmānuja's feet and bathed them in a flood of tears, and lay there speechless like one bewitched and stricken. Rāmānuja was himself greatly moved. He gently lifted up Kūrēṣa, and firmly embracing him, was himself made speechless by the mingled sentiments of joy and grief shaking the very foundations of his soul. with great difficulty, obstructed by tears and by voice made tremulous with emotion and refusing utterance, spoke the one phrase "Kūrēṣa, thou hast given thy eye—the eye of our faith—for the faith!" Kūrēṣa who had lost his voice so long, recovered somewhat, and was able to say:—"Master beloved! I must at least have sinned by thinking, 'this man's mark on the forehead is crooked.' Hence my punishment is deserved." Rāmānuja said, "Beloved, thou, to sin? Rather mine must be the sin, for which thou hast atoned. Come, let us go." So saying, Rāmānuja reached his own monastery, leading Kūrēṣa lovingly by the hand, followed by the immense host of devotees and others mastered thick.



## CHAPTER XXXII

## SHORT EXCURSIONS AND INCIDENTS.

After twelve (or some say fourteen) years<sup>1</sup> of absence, Rāmanuja had returned to his central see, the centre of his operations. The faithful gathered round him. Love and veneration for him had multiplied and deepened, and they all said:—“Worshipful master, by the loss of Mahāpūrṇa, a blank has been created in our hearts, and by the loss of our Kūreṣa's eyes, a sore. Have we lived to see you,—a salve for our ills? Listen, master, the apostate (infidel) Cho'a not only persecuted us and our leaders, but carried his vandalism to great excess by destroying our Vaiṣṇava temples everywhere. He had thus demolished the Viṣṇu Images in Chitrakūta,—about which you shall anon hear more, and was on his way to Srirangam to do the same. But when he halted for the night in a village, he was suddenly taken ill, a fatal sore burst out on his neck,<sup>2</sup> and killed him after terrible suffering. Srirangam, the centre of our faith, was thus miraculously saved. Listen now to what happened at Chitrakūta (Chidambaram). The place, as you are aware, is infested with Saivas, and their leader Cho'a, had torn up Lord Govinda-rāja from His seat—both the mūṛti and the āṣṭaka Images—, and had directed their being cast into the sea. But there was a courtesan by name Tilyā (or Tillai) who is a staunch Vaiṣṇava devotee. She managed to divert the king's attention at the time, so far as to enable the Vaiṣṇava adherents of the place to avert the sea-grave from their Lord, and secretly make away with Him to Tirupati up in

<sup>1</sup> Like Kāma who would not return to Ajodhya for 14 years in spite of Bharata's prayer, the Lord Ranga would not fulfil Rāmanuja's prayers to end Cho'a's persecution, till he also (being Kāma's brother) travelled for 14 years. According to a Belur inscription (vide foot note 1, p. 182) Dharmabha established the Belur Temple in 1039 Saka, (A.C. 1117), so that taking

Rāmanuja's entry into Melukote as about 1092 A.C., it gives 18 years for Rāmanuja's sojourn and plus 2 years for travel, makes in all 20 years as the interval between Rāmanuja actually leaving Srirangam and returning it, 6 years being allowed for his travels to other Shrines &c., after leaving and again joining Srirangam.

<sup>2</sup> This is said to have been caused by God Venkayeṣa striking his neck with the discus, in answer to Rāmanuja's prayers.



in one verse<sup>1</sup>. He then ascended the High Holy Hill of Tirupati to pay his homage to the Lord Venkateśa. Here, Rāmānuja imparted the Art of worshipping God in His Images (Ārādhanā) — called the Nitya — to his two disciples Kūrēśa and Hanumād-Dāsa. There was another disciple Vangi-p-Parattu Nambī, to whom he had promised this knowledge for some time, but an opportunity had not presented itself so far. As however he was concluding his instructions, V P Nambī suddenly presented himself before Rāmānuja, who felt somewhat difficult therefore in the delicate situation, viz., his unbosoming secrets to some, while he had not done so to those whom he had promised, but Rāmānuja excused himself to Nambī thus: — “Listen, Nambī! Hitherto I could not solve to myself the riddle how Lord Krishna who is God all-powerful, submitted himself to be bound by a rope by an ordinary woman Yāśoda. To-day I find the solution inasmuch as by the importunity of my disciples Kūrēśa and Hanumād-Dās, my own strong will bent to impart knowledge to them though I had promised it thee first. My own experience then, of how supplication made my own will to give in, supplies me with the key how even God will allow his resolve to melt before the fire of His votaries’ love. So saying, he gave the promised knowledge to Nambī.”

Rāmānuja took leave of the Lord and descending the Holy Hill, wended his way back to Srirangam via Kāñchi. Settled thus in his see, the High Pontiff dispensed his teachings to crowded audiences, who received them, it is said, as cool showers and balmy zephyrs lulling their parched souls to heavenly rest.

Kulottunga Chōla II (1128—1156 ?) or Vikrama-Chōla (1113—1128) who perhaps was also called Kulottunga, the son

<sup>1</sup> Consult pp 87 ff of Venkateśa-lehāsamālā for further details. Hence in the Ashtottara Hymn to Śrīnivāsa (Venkateśa), His name is coupled with Govinda thus — गोविन्दाय नमो नित्यं श्रीनिवासाय ते नमः [P. 78, Venkateśa-lehā-Māhātmya-

Vārāhe]. On Venkateśa, see Rig Veda VIII, 3, 18. प्रसादिकान्देवि कृते निरिगच्छस्यन्ने । शिरिदिदृशस्त्वमिदं निष्कषातयामसि ॥

<sup>2</sup> Vide Commentaries on Tirumozhi 57, 4.

of Kṛṣṇakāṇṭha-Chōla, who was a pro-Vaiṣṇavite and who had in vain tried to convince his father of the futility of his schemings against the Vaiṣṇavas inasmuch as their strongholds, the Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata could never be repressed, though he might demolish all the Vaiṣṇava temples on earth, and had also suffered reverses of fortune<sup>1</sup> on account of the sins of his father, hearing of Rāmānuja's arrival, repaired to Srirangam in haste, taking with him the Pāṇḍya and Chera Kings. Approaching Rāmānuja, he fell at his feet and craved pardon for his father's faults. From the largeness of his heart, Rāmānuja granted it, and took Kulottunga, by his request, into the Vaiṣṇava fold by administering due sacraments and made him a disciple of Dāsarathi. "No more", cried the king, "shall I exercise any jurisdiction over the Temples. August Sirs, I pray you to assume the entire control yourself from this day." Rāmānuja consented, and calling Dāsarathi, had the entire administration of the Temple formally bestowed on him as a gift in the manner prescribed by the Sāstras. It is written in the work, called *Koṭi-śaṅga*, that a stone inscription to this effect was caused to be installed at the Ārya-bhāt-tal gate.<sup>2</sup> Rāmānuja is stated to be past his centenary by this time.

<sup>1</sup> These reverses appear to have been an invasion by the Pāṇḍyas, and subsequent vassalage under the kings of Vijayanagara. [Vide p 27, *Contributions to the Imperial Gazetteer, Trichinopoly, 1904 A.C.*]

<sup>2</sup> See No. 22, Map of Temple to the second collection of Papers relating to Srirangam, 1894, A.C. From *Epigraphica Indica*, Vol. V,

pp. 92-99, it may be seen that the grant of Vira Chōla, or son of Kulottunga I gives more than 245 Vaiṣṇava names, showing how Śr Vaiṣṇavism had been well established and its adherents venerated. Ard Viṭhala, a Mādhva sannyasi of Rāmānuja tuṭu - (Rev. K. M. S. Translations in Indian Antiquary Vol II).

#### *Refrain.*

Rāmānuja, Doctrine-supporter!

Rod for the great mountain of Dark heretics!

#### *Sarg.*

"They say the Chōla put up a post (Kambha) saying --

'He with the eye on his forehead (Śiva), and no other Godhead there is!'

The Master of the Yatin (Yatipati) seized and flayed him alive,

Rāmānuja was sore at heart at Kūrēṣa's having become blind. One day, he called him anxiously to his side and said "Son, beloved! Lord Varada of Kāñchi is, as we know, a ready granter of wishes. I enjoin thee to sing a hymn to Him to bestow sight on thee again." "Sire," submitted Kūrēṣa, "this material sight, I desire not." "But, beloved, do as I desire," often exhorted Rāmānuja. Kūrēṣa accordingly sang the hymn known as *Varadardya-stava*—one of the five *stava*s—beginning with :—

स्वर्गस्तदस्तिगिरिस्तत्तत्रेश्वरस्तन्ननोनुग्रहस्तत्तदरे ।

निस्संशयविक्रमभयप्रदरेवमौपनिषदीसरस्वती ॥

'Hari! who deck the top of the Hasti Hill, whom the Vedas declare as to have neither equal nor superior, bless me' And in the twenty third stanza, he prayed :—

नीलमेघानिमगच्छन्पुच्छरायनकुन्तलपनन्तरुदन्ताम् ।

अञ्जपाक्षिपदमकुञ्जनेत्रेद्वेद्यात्कुङ्करीरुस्ताम् ॥

'Hasti Lord of bluish hue! Recliner on Ananta! I beseech Thee to ever let my sight see Thy bewitching beauty.' That very night, the Lord appeared in his dream and said, "granted," Kūrēṣa rose next morning with a joyful heart, and after performing the day's ablutions, &c., finished the *stava*, and proceeding to Rāmānuja, repeated before him the whole *stava*, and said—"Sire, the previous night, the Lord appeared in my dream and he has granted me such spiritual sight as is able ever to enjoy his Beatific Vision—Vision such as obtains in Vaikuntha, according to the verse :—

वेकुण्ठेनुपार्लेखे नित्यत्वनम्यवसिष्ठम् ।

पर्यान्तवसदादं वल्लैः प्रार्निनचामरी ॥

(Continued) foot note on page 238.

And made a Choja Shed (Chappara, a shed of the Chōja skin) ?

See, my brother! [verse II]

Saying 'It is a Vyāsa-Tōja! they (the Lingāyatas), not mind-  
ing,

Fasten a bull (Nandi) to a standard (Uthra) and worship it.  
How?

For one (or, for that one) Vyāsa-Tōja, our master (Ārya) [Rāmā-  
nuja]

Stripped off a thousand arms of Śiva's followers (Sarasas).

[verse II]

'In that Vaikuntha, beyond the visible universe, the Immortals see the Eternal Lord with their spiritual eyes.'

"My beloved, that is not what I want, come let us proceed to Lord Varada," said Rāmānuja, annoyed, and went with him to Kāñchi, and bade him repeat the Stava. Kūrēsa began and as he was proceeding, Rāmānuja was obliged to leave the place for a few minutes on some business. But before he returned, Kūrēsa had gone to the end of his Stava, and Lord Varada having appeared and bidden him to ask what he wanted, he had absent-mindedly prayed that Nālārān might be saved even as he might be saved. 'Be it so,' said the Lord. By this time Rāmānuja ran in, and learning what had taken place in his absence, chided Kūrēsa thus: "Son, thou hast acted contrary to my wishes. Thou hast spilt matters. Oh Lord, canst Thou not deign to grant my prayer that Kūrēsa regain (physical) sight?" The Lord was moved at this earnest appeal of Rāmānuja, and spoke thus: "We grant him that sight; but except Me and thee, he shall see no other material object." Rāmānuja was at least satisfied with this, and immediately put Kūrēsa to test by asking him to look at Lord Varada, and describe Him. Kūrēsa did so. 'And now describe me,' asked he next. Kūrēsa, his face lit up with heavenly joy, described his preceptor's person accurately in all detail. Rāmānuja was satisfied and taking leave of the Lord, returned to Srirangam.

Rāmānuja was, after his return, engaged with his disciples, in reading St. Āndāl's Hymnal, the Nāyochiyār-Tirumozhi; and coming to verses IX 6 and 7 *Neramarum* and *Jaruvadu*, in which the Saintess declared that "she would place before the Lord Sundara-rāya of Tirumālirunyalai, one hundred vessels of nectarous food, and if He but came down and ate it all, she would place a hundred thousand more." Rāmānuja stopped at this and looking at his disciples, said — "Why do not we proceed to the Holy Shrine at once and carry out her wish?" So saying, they all rose and journeyed to the place, and spread a great feast before the Deity. Rāmānuja proceeded thence to Sri-villiputtūr, the birth place of St. Āndāl,

<sup>1</sup> This was the person who instigated Chōḍa to send for Rāmānuja to sign the Paper of his faith. He is a disciple of Kūrēsa. See p 170.

and as he was standing before her, lost in devotion, the Saintess by the voice of her priest on duty, conferred upon him the title of Kōl-amar.<sup>1</sup> Rāmānjan next proceeded to Tirunagari of St. Nammāshvār. From Tī. anagari, Rāmānjan paid a visit to Tirukkōlār, about two miles north of it, the birth-place of St. Madhurakavi. As he was proceeding, he met a damsel by name Tiruk-kōlār Ammai, coming from Turuk-kōlār. “Whence art thou coming?” asked he of her. “From Tiruk-kōlār,” said she. To this, Rāmānjan chidingly said.—“I wonder, lady, thou shouldst emerge from a Holy Place, into which, according to the verses of St. Nammāshvār, every one should enter?” “To this, Ammai gave the following long reply\*.—

Holy Sire! who am I to deserve to live in such a Holy Place? for:—

1. Did I go on such a holy mission as Akṛāra?
2. Did I entertain in my house like Vidura?
3. Did I cast off my body like the Rishi's wife?
4. Did I cause a Rāvana to be killed like Sītā?
5. Did I raise the dead like Tondamān?
6. Did I offer a corpse like Ghantakarṇa?
7. Did I adorn (a Sītā) like Anasūya?
8. Did I seek for a Father like Dhruva?
9. Did I repeat the Three-lettered Name like Kaṣhtra-bandhu?
10. Did I get trodden like Ahalya?

\* See Topic 117 and foot note thereunder, p. 123, *Divine Wisdom of Drāvida Saints*.

<sup>1</sup> Viṣṇu-Purāṇa.

<sup>2</sup> Mahā-bhārata, Sabhā-Parva.

<sup>3</sup> Śrī Bhāgavata, X, 23, 28.— तत्रैकाविंशत्यमका भगवतं वधाशुतम् ! हरोपगृह्यविजयो देहकर्मानुबन्धनम् ॥ Sudarṣana of Itihāsa-samuccaya(?)

<sup>4</sup> Rāmāyaṇa.

<sup>5</sup> Mahālakṣmī, Kṛma's wife, Venkateṣa-Māhātmya (Bhaviṣya-puṭṭam, 14th Adh).

<sup>6</sup> Harivamśa.

<sup>7</sup> Rāmāyaṇa.

<sup>8</sup> Viṣṇu-purāṇa.

<sup>9</sup> Viṣṇu-dharma. The Name is Gṛ-va-ṣa; also see Tirumālai, 2, 4.

<sup>10</sup> Rāmāyaṇa, or Adhyātma-Rāmāyaṇa, 14th Adh.

- 11 Did I ripen, while yet raw, like Āndāl ?
- 12 Did I establish (or proclaim) Nārāyaṇa like St. Periyāzhvār ?
- 13 Did I ransack religions like St. Tirumazhīṣai ?
- 14 Did I know Him as "the Subtlest" like St. Nammāzhvār ?
- 15 Did I say : "anything," like St. Kulasekhara ?
- 16 Did I say "I pledge my word," like Kṛṣṇa ?
- 17 Did I give clues (to Rāmā), like Kabandha ?
- 18 Did I reveal secrets like Trījāta ?
- 19 Did I recognize God (in Rāmā) like Mandōdārī ?
- 20 Did I say : "I know Thee," like Viśvāmītra ?
- 21 Did I say : "I know of no other God," like St. Maṇḍurakavi ?
- 22 Did I give birth to a God like Devakī ?
- 23 Did I say : "conceal Thy discus," like Vasudēva ?
- 24 Did I bring up a Cowherd like Yaśoda ?
- 25 Did I do a mite (of service) like the squirrels ?
- 26 Did I take fried rice like Kuchēla ?

<sup>11</sup> A precocious prodigy in divinity. Read his life in our *Lives of Āndāl*.

<sup>12</sup> Read his life in our *Lives of Āzhvāra*.

<sup>13</sup> Do. do. , and verse Peruḷ-āya in *Tiruccanda-viruttam*.

<sup>14</sup> Do. do. Also v. 75 "Pūyṇam" of *Periya-Tiruvandādi* may be read.

<sup>15</sup> Do. do. verse 1V, 10. *Perumāḷ* *Tirumōzhi*.

<sup>16</sup> *Bhagavad-gītā* XVIII, 65 सत्यमेव जयते मयोक्तिः । Also *Bhārata* story is referable, where a dead boy was restored to life by Kṛṣṇa— all others having failed. He is said to have spoken thus —यदिनेदमवस्येत् सत्यं प्रपद्यितुं शक्नोति । अन्त्याहन्तं मे सर्वं तेन ज्ञेयं तु ब्रह्मकः ॥ Also see *Arjuna-dha-Purva*, 70 and 18 ff. beginning with नृपवीम्युत्तरेभिः सत्यमेव जयति । &c.

<sup>17</sup> = Rāmāyaṇa.

<sup>18</sup> Do. *ब्रह्मवैवर्त* I, 19, 14.

<sup>19</sup> Verses *Tēru-maṭṭ-āyida* in *Kaṁpinṇu-Śrīrūtām*.

<sup>20</sup> = *Viśvān-Purāṇa*.

<sup>21</sup> *Pāṇina-purāṇa* (?). Also v. 22, *Tirumōzhi*.

<sup>22</sup> *Śrī Bhāgavata*.



- 27 Did I bestow weapons like Agastya ?
28. Could I enter the seraglio like Saṃjaya ?
29. Could I, by 'works' obtain bliss like Janaka ?
30. Did I bite the toe and see Him like St. Tirumangai ?
- 31 Did I become the umbrella and so on, like Ādi Śeṣha ?
32. Did I carry Him, like Garuḍmān ?
- 33 Did I keep promise, like Nam-pādurān ?
34. Did I behold God in a nook, like the First Āshvār ?
35. Did I guard two princes, like Vālmiki ?
36. Did I offer two garlands, like St. Tondaradippodī ?
- 37 Did I obtain truths, like Tiru-k-kacchi-nambī ?
38. Was I absorbed into God, like St. Tirup-pāṇḍarār ?
39. Did I say : " send," like Vasiṣṭha ?
40. Did I worship sandals, like Kongu-pirāṭṭi ?
41. Did I offer clay-flowers, like Karuva-nambī ?
42. Did I vociferate " Oh . The Origin !," like Gajendra ?
43. Did I offer scents, like the hunchback Kubjā ?
44. Did I offer wreaths, like the Mātākāra ?

<sup>27</sup> Rāmāyana.

<sup>28</sup> Sri Bhāgavata and Bhārata.

<sup>29</sup> Bhagavad-gītā, III, 30, Karma-saṃcāri, &c.

<sup>30</sup> Read his life in our Lives of Āshvāra.

<sup>31</sup> Stotra-Ratna v, 40; and v. 53, Śaṃśai, 1st Tiruvandādi.

<sup>32</sup> See Gajendra-Mokṣa, Bhāgavata.

<sup>33</sup> Rāmāyaṇa-purāṇa.

<sup>34</sup> See our Lives of Āshvāra.

<sup>35</sup> Rāmāyana, the two princes being Lava and Kuṣa.

<sup>36</sup> Read his life in our Lives of Āshvāra. Flower-wreath and Hymn-wreath (Tirumālai).

<sup>37</sup> See Life of Rāmānuja.

<sup>38</sup> See his life in our Lives of Āshvāra.

<sup>39</sup> Rāmāyana (sending Rāma with Viśvāmitra).

<sup>40</sup> Read Life of Rāmānuja. (Rāmānuja's Sandals), p. 176.

<sup>41</sup> Karuva-nambī or Bhūma. [Venkateśa Māhātmya, Bhavishyottara,

11th Adh.]

<sup>42</sup> Bhāgavata.

<sup>43</sup> and <sup>44</sup> Viṣṇu-purāṇa.

45. Did I keep my assigned place, like Bharata ?  
 46. Did I serve on the way, like Lakshmana ?  
 47. Did I land on the other shore, like Guba ?  
 48. Did I fight with the demon, like Jatâyus ?  
 49. Did I land on this shore, like Vibhishana ?  
 50. Did I offer sweet fruits, like Sabari ?  
 51. Did I say "Here He is," like Prahlâda ?  
 52. Did I hide (Krishna) like Dadhibhânda ?  
 53. Did I go to the forest, like Râma ?  
 54. Did I proclaim discovery (of Sitâ), like Hanumân ?  
 55. Did I relinquish both hands, like Draupadi ?  
 56. Did I say the excuse: "milk boils over," like  
 Vaduga-nambi ?  
 57. Did I hold my throat, like Selvappillai ?  
 58. Did I deserve the command. "stop here," as Idaiyâ-  
 ttru-k-kudi Nambi ?

\* , \* , \* , \* = and = Râmâyana.

\* Vishnu-purâna.

\* This is said to be related in Âgalya, Mahâbhârata or Brindâvana-Mâhâtmya. Dadhibhânda was a cord-seller. He is said to have given shelter to Lord Krishna when He was badly pursued after by His associates in the play called *kudâ* and *ank* and when Krishna asked the cord-seller to ask his reward, he asked for Moksha for himself and for those who belonged to him, down to the cord-pot in which Krishna had hid himself. This was granted.

\*\* Râmâyana.

\* Mahâbhârata, Subhâ-Purana.

\* Vaduga-nambi alias Ândhra-purana. See his life p. 231.

\* It appears one day very hot milk was offered to the Lord at Tirunârâyanaapuram (Melakote). Selvappillai, who was a great devotee felt the milk scorch his throat; and hence held it in pain. Also the incident of Lord Sampatkutubra embracing Râmanuja is referable.

\* By oversight we omitted this Topic in our *Divine Wisdom of the Divya Saints*. I. K. Nambi was a regular visitor to Srirangam when festivities of Lord Ranga came on. After one set was over and before another came on, he constantly dwelt in the interval in his mind on the happy scenes which he witnessed during the previous festivities. Another season of celebrations came round. But Nambi had grown nearly a hundred years old, and could not go to the first day of the ceremonies (*akav-irupasa*). But Lord Ranga was never happy without his devotees being present. He was however able to attend on the earth

59. Did I carry the message "He is dead," like Māruti-yāndān ?
60. Did I go in pursuit (of God) like Nāthamuniṅal ?
61. Did I say "I want Him not," like Kūrōṣa ?
62. Did I refute Advaita, like Rāmānuja ?
63. Did I see the discus, like Nallān ?
64. Did I go to Anantapuram (Trivendram), like Ālavandār ?
65. Did I feel separation like Teyva-vāriyāndān ?
66. Did I compose Andādi like Anandanār ?
67. Did I give counsel, like Mālyavān ?
68. Did I opine . 'mere ocean-roar,' like Mahāpūrṇa ?

**Foot note on page 214—(continued).**

day, when the Lord asked: "what can we do for thee, beloved?" "Lord," he said, "so long has the body, Thou grant me, served me well; now it is so old and worn out that it cannot serve any good purpose. It is on that account that I have this season been for five days absent." "In that case return no more from Us," said the Lord. And by the time the Lord's procession approached the middle entrance of the Temple, Nambī had shed off his mortal coil.

<sup>59</sup> Read Rāmānuja's Life. He refers to Kṛṣṇa-*Chōḷa* [Shaga vad-vistaya Vol. VII, p. 3535, *Vedānta* VII, 10, 4.]

<sup>60</sup> Read his life.

<sup>61</sup> Where Kūrōṣa refused to enter Lord Ranga's Shrine [Page 197].

<sup>62</sup> See Rāmānuja's Life.

<sup>63</sup> Nallān was a Brāhman disciple of Rāmānuja, and a great devotee of Lord Varada of Kāñchi. He saw a corpse floating down the river Vaigai which bore on its arms the Vamśānuva symbols of discus. This was enough for Nallān to drag it to shore and perform funeral rites. The Brāhmanas of Kāñchi resented this and declined to eat with him. But Lord Varada put on a Brāhmana's disguise and attended the funeral meals. The Lord thereon gave him the title *Nallānka pōḷḍa*, *Namānka nallān* i.e. 'Though the whole world is against him, we are for him.'

<sup>64</sup> See Yāmunāchārya's Life.

<sup>65</sup> See Yāmunā's disciple who wasted away without his guru.

<sup>66</sup> Disciple of Rāmānuja who composed Rāmānuja-Nūtṭ-andādi in praise of Rāmānuja.

<sup>67</sup> Rāmānuja. Mālyavān's advice to Rāvaṇa.

<sup>68</sup> See Rāmānuja's Life, with reference to funerals performed on a Sadra, Marantri Nambī, which when Rāmānuja objected, Purṇa declared all the ordinary regulations on the subject, having strict reference to caste etc., were as useless as the roar of the ocean. [Pp. 167-168].

69. Did I exact promise, like Gōchthi-Pūrṇa ?  
 70. Did I obtain mercy like the dumb-person ?  
 71. Did I give up my body, like Tiru-narayūr-araiyar ?  
 72. Did I profess insignificance, like Śrī-aiṭa-pūrṇa ?  
 73. Did I thrust my finger into the snake's mouth like Embār ?  
 74. Did I vanquish (a Pāndit) by showing marks on arms, like Bhattārya ?  
 75. Did I seek a secluded spot like Villiputtūr Bhagavar ?  
 76. Did I jump into water like Kanaparatt-ammai ?

On hearing this, Rāmānuja was thunderstruck and taking Ammai with him back to Tirakkolūr, rested under her roof, and partook of the food prepared by her as a token of his admiration and appreciation of her spiritual enlightenment and attainments evinced by her most erudite discourse. Before

<sup>69</sup> Rāmānuja's Life, where Pūrṇa exacted a promise of secrecy from Rāmānuja not to divulge religious secrets, but which Rāmānuja infringed. [P. 97.]

<sup>70</sup> Rāmānuja's Life where he gave salvation, unsolicited, to a poor dumb creature. [P. 169.]

<sup>71</sup> See Śrī Vachana Bhushan I. In order to quench the flames in which the Lord's car had by accident been enveloped, he rushed into the flames with his sons and perished in the act.

<sup>72</sup> Rāmānuja's Life where Śrī Śaṭa came in advance to meet Rāmānuja on the Tirupati-Hill.

<sup>73</sup> See Rāmānuja's Life.

<sup>74</sup> See page 155.

<sup>75</sup> He was a Saṁyāsīn. When he went to a bathing place which was resorted to by all, he left the crowds and sought out a secluded spot. *Jāna-Śāra* of A. P. Embaramānar, verse 13 "Paṇḍit" and Periya Jiyar's Comment thereon, may be consulted.

<sup>76</sup> This lady is said to have been a disciple of Sage Yāmunā. He was once crossing the Kāveri in full flood—from Uttamarkōil (Karaiyānūr) to Śrīraṅgam, in a boat. The boatman complained of too much load. He was rowing in midstream with all his might, and now feared the boat would sink. K. Ammai, in order to save the life of her guru and others in the boat, undertook to ease the boat by jumping into the river. The boat, thus relieved, was rowed away in safety to the shore. But Providence saved the lady's life, for when she jumped, she found herself landing on a rock just below the water-surface.

returning, he blessed her, and saw to the due performance of all festivals connected with Lord Nīkshēpavīta and St. Madhurakavi. Rāmānuja now returned to Srīrangam.

An interesting incident is chronicled<sup>1</sup> as having occurred about this time. The washerman employed to wash the clothes of the Srīvaishnavas of Srīrangam, one day washed Lord Ranga's garments as well. He brought them and showed to Rāmānuja. Rāmānuja was so pleased with him that he took him to the Lord in the Temple and prayed to Him thus: "Lord, deign to notice the careful way in which this washerman has washed Thy garments. Indeed, with them wound round Thee, Thou wouldst appear to such advantage." Lord Ranga accepted the recommendation and replied to Rāmānuja thus:—"For the loving services rendered to us this day by this washerman, we forgive the offence of his ancestor, the washerman of our Krīṣṇa-avatār."<sup>2</sup> To this day it is the custom for the Lord to receive the clothes from the washerman just as he brings them and use it for the Lord. This is a privilege inasmuch as in India Society, the washerman is a low-caste man and the clothes brought by him have to be washed again before a Brāhmaṇa will wear them.

It is here chronicled that there was a disciple of Rāmānuja called Pattin-p-perumāl. He is said to have been of low-caste. He lived away from the sacred town of Srīrangam, in an out-of-the-way hut, and used to drown himself in the joy of singing the psalms of the Holy Āshvārā. Rāmānuja's way from the river Kaveri to Srīrangam lay where this disciple thus lived. One day he was returning from his bath accompanied as usual by a large number of his followers. He stopped short at the hut, and bidding his followers leave him and proceed to Srīrangam, entered the hut, and spent the time with the disciple as long as it pleased him, in the sweet ecstasy brought on by the singing of the Holy Hymnal. Had an ordinary person consorted thus with a low caste man as Rāmā-

<sup>1</sup> Vide Bhagavad gītāya, on Tīrthāyātrāḥ V 10, 8, *Nitya-nṛyam* also Topic 58 of our *Divine Wisdom of Deśikar's Saṁhitā*.

<sup>2</sup> Read the story in foot-note, *op. cit.*

nja did, he would have been outcasted, but they dared not utter a syllable of reproach against Rāmānjan's doing it—another illustration of the canon that great men alone can do such things, as laid down in the Dharma-sāstras, *सहस्रं वदन्तम्* 'the daring acts of the Mahātmas,' and *नमोऽस्य देवाय* of Śrīmad Bhāgavata. No reproach thus attaches to the character of glorious souls. Such incidents though trivial in themselves, are fraught with great significance and important issues as affecting and moulding the organic-character of a new community which would at the time be taking definite shape and acquiring special functions in the body politic of the Āryan-Drāvida.

This new community of Śrī Vaiṣṇava was not confined exclusively to the Brāhmanas. It was catholic and entertained in its fold every man and woman regardless of caste or color. The community was growing fast and counted millions, of which a definite number as constituting the elite, and as calculated to carry on the evangel set on foot by Rāmānjan, is memorialized in the verse—*सहस्रं यतिर्यत्तु सप्ततिर्यत्तु चैव । सप्तत्येवैतानि यानि सन्ति ।* i.e. "The King of the ascetics, Rāmānjan, had in his following (700) seven hundred Yatis (ascetics), (74) seventy-four (episcopal) Throves, known as the Āchārya-purnabhas, and countless others,—(12,000) twelve-thousand Ēkāṅgis (monks of all classes), (300) three-hundred Kōṭṭi-amṇais (nuns), many kings, and others both 'of the Holy Thread' and 'the Threadless' (Sattādavar)." A list of the names will be given separately. And here, only the chief members with the work allotted to them in the immediate establishment attached to the rec, will be noted. Kūrēva, Dāvarathu, Nadādār Ālvā and the Bhattars were to attend Śrī-Bhāṣya Discourses, Yajña-mūrti (Arulāla-p-perumāl-Emberamānār) was to attend to the worship of the chapel, Kidāmbi-p-perumāl and Kidāmbi-ā-līān were to superintend the culinary department, Vata-yinnā or Āndhara-pūrpa (= Vadaga-nambi) was for oil-bathing and other sundry services to Rāmānjan, Gomātham Sīry-ālvān was to carry the kamandala (vessel) and sandals, Dhannardān was to be the treasurer, Ammaṅgi was to hold milk, Ukkal-ālvān was to

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serve meals; Ukkalamūl was to fan; Māruti-p-periyāndān was to minister on occasions of natural impulses, Maronṛillā-Māruti-y-āndān was to be the steward, Tūya-muni-velam was to be the waterman, Tīru-v-aranga-māligai was to be the storekeeper, Vandar and Sendar were to take service under kings and fill the see-coffers, Rāmaṇja-vēlaikkārar was to be the body-guard, and Akalanka-nāttālvān was to win polemical victories over dissenters.

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## CHAPTER XXXIII.

## VĀTU-PŪRNA OR ĀNDHRA-PŪRNA.

Vātu-pūrṇa or Āndhra-pūrṇa, whose first entry into our history may be remembered as having taken place when Rāmānuja was at Sāligrāma (Mysore),<sup>1</sup> is known, above all other disciples, to have been the closest attached adherent of Rāmānuja, and the staunchest follower of the Path, known as the Pañcā-mopāya, or the Fifth Path—the Āchāryābhimāna,<sup>2</sup> in other words, unswerving faith placed in the Saviour, who is incarnated on earth, and never dividing such faith between a saviour who has taken on humanity, and God who ever remains Divine. Vātu-pūrṇa was not a mere theoretical believer in this mode of salvation, but exemplified it forcibly by his personal example. In the exclusive worship he paid to Rāmānuja's Holy Feet, he excluded all thoughts of God. His Saviour was his God. He recognized no other rival Saviour-God to his visible human Saviour. Once on an occasion, Rāmānuja went to the Holy shrine Tiruvellāra (about 10 miles north of Srīraṅgam). Vātu-pūrṇa followed him of course, carrying the Tiruppal-kūḍai<sup>3</sup> containing washed clothes, images, articles of worship, &c. Rāmānuja, after reaching Tiruvellāra, went to bathe and returning, opened the cover of the wallet to find to his surprise and chagrin that his own sandals had been placed on the top

<sup>1</sup> The descendants of this disciple are close relatives to the writer of this work, and to this day enjoy the rights and privileges of the shrine built over Rāmānuja's Holy Feet at this place—a place of holy pilgrimage to this day. In the days of Kṛṣṇa-rāja Odeyar, two brilliant lights of this family known as Kīlīnghaṭṭa Sadarānā-chārya and Maṅga-chārya (brothers) shed their Vaidic glory in his court, and wrote many works such as *Charamārtha-vṛtti Ghaṭa Kar-pura Shbedi*, *Pada renakā-Sahasra*, *Rāmānuja-Sārva-bhūma-Satāka*, *Yādevādī vilāsa*, a *Sātra-Bhāṣya*, *Kamālāpta-karṇāvaya*, *Shaja vait-rāja Stotra*, *Shaja bhāṣyakāra Stotra*, *Kīlīnghaṭṭa-bhāṣi* (nāṭak.)

*Āchārya-stuti*, and many songs in Sanskrit, Telugu and Kannada. Their descendant Rāmāchārya has been wearing laurels in the court of the Baroda Mahārāja and has made many disciples in Bombay and Gujerat and. Their memorial verse is thus sung: श्रीवत्पुत्राया विरहान्नयपदेका । वाचस्पत्यकारेण-शरणपुत्रार्पणमिति ॥

<sup>2</sup> For which, see our Soteriological Table, pp. 572-4 of our *Bhagavad-gītā*. That Vātu-pūrṇa is an illustrious example of this Path is prominently shown in Lokāchārya's *Srīrādhāna Bhāṣana*, and Periyā-Tīrvar's *Ārti-prabandha*.

<sup>3</sup> A kind of wallet or portmanteau made of reeds.



of all other things. Irrate, he called Pārṇa and asked him to explain this sacrilege—the sacrilege of placing his sandals over the heads of his holy images of worship! “Sire,” promptly answered Pārṇa, “how is my God inferior to these?”

Rāmānuja went to visit the Lords in the temples, but Pārṇa’s gaze was steadily fixed on Rāmānuja’s handsome person. Rāmānuja often marked this, and once remarked “Son, why dost thou not direct thy sight to the charming eyes of the Lord?” Pārṇa then looked at the Lord and looked at Rāmānuja alternately for a few seconds and then exclaimed, “Sire, the eyes that have seen thee cannot see other objects.”<sup>1</sup>

Rāmānuja used to hand over the remains of food, after he had eaten, to Pārṇa to eat, the latter, after eating, wiped his soiled hands on his head. Rāmānuja fretfully chided him for this slovenly habit and directed him henceforth to wash his hands with water. “Yea,” said Pārṇa. The next day, Rāmānuja handed over to him to eat consecrated food given to him in the Temple. Pārṇa ate and washed his hands with water. “What hast thou done, son,” exclaimed Rāmānuja, “the Lord’s food is too holy to be thus washed away, thou oughtest to wipe it on thy head.” “Sire,” reported he, “I have done as thou biddest me yesterday.” Rāmānuja simply said: “Son, thou hast overcome me.”

On another occasion Pārṇa was busy boiling milk for Rāmānuja in the Math, when Lord Ranganātha was conveyed in procession, decked in all the glory of decorative art. Rāmānuja rose to go, see and pay homage to the Deity, calling Pārṇa, as he went, to come and do the same with him. But Pārṇa, immediately excused himself saying “Holy sire, if I come out to see thy God, the milk that is on the fire for my God (Rāmānuja) will boil over.”

At one time, some kinsmen of his came to his house as guests, and used his cooking pots for preparing their meals. But as soon as they left him, Pārṇa broke them all and threw them into the rubbish heap, and picking up cast-away pots in

<sup>1</sup> *செவ்வழிநிலை கண்ணகியை உதடுதல் தலைகளைவிட.*

the backyard of Dāśarathi, brought them home and used them ;<sup>1</sup> thus showing that everything that belongs to the Saviour is holy, and all else is unholy. This demeanour proves the acme of the state of a spiritually risen soul disinterested from all touch of worldliness (*vairāgya*.)

Pūrṇa was strict as regards the taking of Śrī pāda tīrtha, for he sipped no water washed off any other's foot save that of his Saviour, Rāmānuja. He memorialised this faith of his, by shaping an image of his feet and setting them up for worship for all time to come at the village of Śāligrama—as the most cherished treasure for himself and all posterity, and that it must be looked upon as such by all the coming generations, was the most solemn trust which he imposed on those near and dear to him, at the time of his translation from the mundane. Vatu-pūrṇa is thus assigned a place in the inner circle of Rāmānuja's hierarchical institutions, called the *Aṣṭa-diggajas*, or the Eight Elephants of Faith to guard the eight cardinal points of the compass.<sup>2</sup> Thus says it was who sang the famous hymn to Rāmānuja, called the *Rāmānuj-āsthottriya-stava-nāma*, sung every day by every Śrīvaiṣṇava. The last verse runs thus—

वतुपूरुणैवमहात्म्यदेवं स्तोत्रं कृतं सर्वमवसानम् ।

मन्त्रीवत्तुमुपविष्टोऽवतनीं वदुस्तु वातुपूरुणस्तवाम् ॥

<sup>1</sup> The meaning of this is that when a spiritual relation with spiritual men is established, that becomes holy, and all affections contracted with kinsmen who are worldly are contaminations. Their very touch is considered as antagonistic to the growth of the new spiritual relation. The parallel to this idea is Jesus saying, "Every one that hath left house, or bro-

ther, or sister, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands for my name's sake &c." [Mat. XIX, 29]; and "if any man come to me and hate not his father and mother &c." [Luke Xiv 26].

<sup>2</sup> The holy descendants of Pūrṇa mentioned on page 271<sup>1</sup> foot note 1, have sung thus in their *Yatirāja adhya līṭānam-pāṭaka* वातुपूरुणा-कुटुम्बसर्वदेवात्मकुटुम्बम् &c.

## CHAPTER XXXIV

## ANANTA-SŪRI OR ANANTĀCHĀRYA.

Some interesting incidents in the life of Anantārya, another staunch disciple of Rānāyā, are related thus. From previous pages it is known that he was the person who had undertaken to settle in Tirupati and do all the services of Lord Srinivāsa. It may also be remembered that he had created a flower garden to which he was paying personal attention. He now wished to construct a small reservoir for water for that purpose. He began excavating it by his own manual labour. But a Brahmachārin suddenly put in his appearance and saying "Aged sire, the task is too much for thee. Let me help and lighten it," stretched his hand to take off his head the basket in which he was carrying earth. Anantārya arrested the boy's hand and said—"Son, if I resign my basket, I shall faint, if you take my basket, you will faint." But he was a stubborn boy and rejoined "No fear of that, Sire, trust me." Anantārya remonstrated and said "Son, this service is my life, if you also want *life*, go, fetch your own basket, and carry it." The boy disappeared for the present. Anantārya went on with his work and pressed his poor wife into the service though she was pregnant at the time. She was employed in carrying loads of earth and emptying the same on to the bank. Her returns were at first slow, but they became soon rapid. Anantārya remarked it with surprise and asked her to explain how she managed to return so rapidly. She naively said "A Brahmachārin boy" *sire* "meets me half the way, carries the load for me and brings me back the basket. Hence Sire, your work is done more speedily." "Who is that impertinent archin meddling with my work, arrested?" fumed Anantārya in anger, and running after the boy, gave him a poke under the chin with his crow-bear, saying "Take that for thy trouble, and get thee gone." The boy took to his heels as if in fright. But the temple authorities found, and Anantārya too after, that Lord Srinivāsa in the shrine was profusely bleeding in the chin. This they stopped by stuffing camphor into the wound. [This is done even to this day, and the camphor is distributed to devotees as *prāsāda*].



dismiss thee from this place?" "Lord, our Saints have sung that Thou art a sojourner on this Hill<sup>1</sup> like myself, Thou mightest have come to stay here a little earlier than myself, and that is all the difference between us. This Hill is therefore not Thine, it is our common property. Thou hast no authority therefore to dispossess me of it." The Lord was mightily pleased with His curious devotee, which Anantārya was.

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<sup>1</sup> "பரமசைவநாதர் தஞ்சாவரம்."

## CHAPTER XXXV.

## THE SALVATION OF KŪRĒṢA.

Tradition here takes up the finishing episodes in the life of the most exemplary disciple and martyr Śrī Kūrēṣa. It is said that his figure forms the alto-relievo in the Life of Rāmānuja, and his exit from the world's stage takes place in advance of that of his revered Master Śrī Rāmānuja as will appear in the sequel.

Rāmānuja must have been about 110 years and even more by this time. As redoubtable as he was in his championship of Vaiṣṇavism, he was in his strength and zeal unflagging. A recluse, in quiet seclusion, he was importing to his hosts of disciples the quintessence of the doctrines it was his mission to propagate. One day, Kūrēṣa went to visit Lord Raṅganātha all by himself. "Thou seemst as if thou hast something in thy heart to tell me," said the Lord. Kūrēṣa broke out into praise which took the shape of a splendid Sanskrit verse,—gifted poet as he was—which he explained at great length by his own commentaries. The Lord was so pleased as to press Kūrēṣa to ask any favour of him. But Kūrēṣa humbly said that he had every favour bestowed on him, there was nothing more to ask. 'No,' said the Lord, 'once more ask, and ask for more, if not for thee, for the love that I bear to my beloved Spouse, Śrī, and love for my Rāmānuja.' Kūrēṣa submitted his wish that he be released from the prison of the body, and be gathered to His Feet. "Ask some other thing than that," the Lord said, but Kūrēṣa declared that he could think of nothing else. "Let it be so, then," the Lord said, "what thou askest shall not only be boon for thee, but a boon conferred on every one that has any sort of relation with thee." Kūrēṣa, receiving this message, walked out from the sanctum in all the dignity and glory of a crown-prince, soon destined to occupy the throne in the Kingdom of Paratma-jala, and instead of going to his own house, sped beyond the outermost rampart of the Temple and took

<sup>1</sup> *śrī Rāmānuja Mahatmya*. [2nd T. Andāḍi, 92].

shelter in Āshvār's (his father's) house. Intelligence soon reached Rāmānuja as to what had happened. Agreeably startled he stood up, and flung his upper garment into the air—an expression of infinite joy. The disciples who watched this, failed to understand what Rāmānuja meant by this act, and humbly asked him to explain. "My faithful," he said "I bear also relationship with Kūrēṣa. My salvation, about which I may have doubts,<sup>1</sup> is thus made safe and sure." This explains the important consequence that follows from the spiritual relation into which a Master and his disciples may enter; and that is, that saving power is as truly vested in a qualified disciple with regard to his Master, as in a qualified master with regard to his disciple. But Rāmānuja's joy soon gave way to grief, at the impending prospect of separation from his dearest disciple and associate, Śrī Kūrēṣa, the like of whom there was none, and he forthwith left his Bath with all his assembly to meet Kūrēṣa enshrouded in the Saint's shrine. They met and Rāmānuja chidingly remonstrated with Kūrēṣa for having done an act without previously taking counsel with him. Kūrēṣa kept submissively silent. "Why dost thou not speak, Āshvār," addressed Rāmānuja, "What was thy object in asking the Lord to let thee go to the Blessed Realm in advance of me?" "Holy Sir," now spoke Kūrēṣa, "My object was to preserve the order of precedence there." "Speak not, beloved, in conundrums," returned Rāmānuja, "explain thyself." "Sure," began Kūrēṣa, "the saint's hymn 'mudiyudai' tells us that the angels who are our elders in Heaven come out of its gates to welcome those younger brothers of theirs, who proceed thither from here. This is out of order for younger ones should always go and welcome the elders. This is the order I wish to preserve. Hence I go in advance and welcome my Master when he comes." Rāmānuja said—"My most beloved, thou forgettest the rule that obtains in heaven नमस्कृत्यैव चक्रम,

<sup>1</sup> How could Rāmānuja, himself a Saviour, doubt his own salvation? is a question which will naturally arise. The doubt had come to him on the occasion of his receiving the diploma of his guru of Goethi pūrṇa (vide P. Ch.), whom he dis-

obeyed, by revealing the mysteries of religion kept so long sacred, and this doubt vanquished by the Lord's gift to Kūrēṣa, to whom Rāmānuja bore spiritual kinship. Read verse at the end of this chapter.

All differences and distinctions disappear there and yet thou desirdest to perpetuate even there the relation that obtains here between us as master and disciple. In all the spheres, is there a soul to match thee?" So broke out Rāmānuja, and could not restrain tears trickling down his cheeks, attended by no, but observing that Kūrēṣa had little time now, checked himself and approaching closer, hugged him to his bosom and whispered into his ear the Holy Draya-Mantra, and turning to the spectators, whose curiosity was evidently roused by this act of his, spoke thus — "Understand me, sirs. Our Kūrēṣa does not need a sacrament of any kind, and yet I administer it in the last moments, lest our spiritual prince Kūrēṣa miss the bliss of hearing the sacramental formula from my lips, even like the royal scion asking for his after-dinner aromatics, though he had chewed it a thousand times before. To our Kūrēṣa, the Draya is his daily nutriment, and I must serve it for the last time." "Dear son, beloved Āshvān," he said, now turning to Kūrēṣa, "thou art my very soul, how can I part with thee? Canst thou not be kind to thy Master? Take him with thee to Heaven. Why leavest him behind to suffer cruel pang of separation? How canst thou enjoy Heaven without him? [On page 2527, Vol V of the Telugu Edition of the *Bhagavadgītā*, the conversation is thus recorded — "While I am yet here, son, how wert thou anxious for Heaven? "Sire," said Kūrēṣa, "in the depth of my thoughts for the miseries of earthly existence, I forgot this point. Pray forgive me." Rāmānuja said, "if Lord Ranga could grant thee a boon, he could grant me one too. So I will go and ask him to stop thee here." So saying, Rāmānuja, went a few paces towards the shrine, but stopped abruptly, and reflected thus — "God's will is unalterable. What audacity on my part to go and force Him to change it? Pecnavi. Let me submit and be resigned to the inevitable." So saying, he retraced his steps. Then followed the further conversation with Kūrēṣa]. How can I exist here without thee? Alas, the Lord in Heaven has attracted thee, though our Lord Ranganātha here possesses every attraction. So then, thou wilt sever thyself from thy Ranga? Happy is the Lord in Heaven and happy His celestial



hosts to claim thee as their own! Luckless are we here and this sleeping Lord here, Ranga, to lose thee! But let me not, my dearest, change thy mind and disturb thy plans. Be it as thou wilt. All hast to thee, my son, go, go to the Blessed Eternal Kingdom and rule there in eternal peace and bliss!" So saying, Rāmānuja drew him closer into his embrace and fondly stroking him on the back, continued

"Āzhvāo' I salute thee, thou hast now my leave to depart." Kūrēṣa spoke not a word. His heart was too full for expression. He fell at Rāmānuja's feet like a senseless block of wood. Rāmānuja speedily raised him up, when Kūrēṣa pressed his holy feet on his head and to his breast, and prayed for the administration of the holy water washed of his feet. Rāmānuja administered it in serene solemnity and Kūrēṣa took it<sup>1</sup> after addressing the memorial verse—

योगित्वमभ्युत्पत्तवद्भुजपुष्पदन्तम व्यापहितस्तदिजरांश्चक्षुषायमेन ।  
अस्मद्गुरोर्भगवतोदयदयैकसिंघो रामभुजस्यचरकोशरत्नपथे ॥

"Rāmānuja's Holy Feet are my Refuge—Rāmānuja, my blessed guru, the Ocean of Mercy,—Rāmānuja who so loves the gold of God's Feet that all else to him is dross."

Rāmānuja made a move now towards his Math, towards the North River (Kolladam), Kūrēṣa following him a little distance. "Pray stop now," enjoined Rāmānuja and Kūrēṣa with folded hands retraced his steps to a pandal close by Āzhvar's house. He now called his wife Āndal-amma, to his side and asked her what her wish was. She said "August Sire, thy wish is my wish. My own, I have none." So saying she fell on his feet with folded hands. He now called his sons Bhattārya and Sri-Īkma-p-pilā to his side, and counselled them thus "Dear children, ye have no bereavement to be-moan, for ye have Lord Ranga, your Father, and His Holy Sponse as your Mother. By them ye have been brought up. But

<sup>1</sup> Washing the feet of holy men is an oriental ceremony, which Christ himself did to his disciples. The sipping of the water (known as *Śrīpādātṛtha*) which prevails

among the Śrivaishnavas is done in order to inhibit the magnetic influence of the spiritual person, as a cure both for physical as well as psychical ills.

forget not that Rāmānuja is your Saviour. Be obedient to Āṇḍāl. By thought or speech or deed run not against Holy Men, on the other hand ever seek their company." The sons wept and fell at their father's feet. "Weep not, dear children," cried Kūrīsa, fondly raising them. "for if your grief is caused on account of temporal relationship, ye meddle with spiritual relationship, ye hold with Rāmānuja, but if it is due to our soul-relationship, then ye call it in question by such grief. Either way ye have no cause for regrets. Cease then and rise above such worldly weaknesses." So exhorting, Kūrīsa laid himself down, head towards the Temple, resting on the lap of Pillai p-pillai-Āshvān, and feet resting on the lap of Āṇḍālamma and dismissing from his mind every other thought than that of the Holy Feet of Rāmānuja, winged his way into the ethereal spaces. Rāmānuja was soon apprised of the event. He at once hastened to the spot and consoled Bhaṭṭārya who was weeping, and telling him that no tears should be shed over an auspicious event, directed him to attend to the funeral ceremonies.<sup>1</sup> The Brahma-medha ritual combined with that of the Vaishnava, was duly performed; and the following verse was composed to his memory :—

श्रीकुरुहोदिकेसो यमदकिमभीमि ।

युक्तकस्यशोकद्वे निमित्तदुःखसुखनाम् ॥

श्रीमन्मुरमुजभीमं श्रीकुरुहोदिकमुपास्यह ।

ममद्वन्द्वतो न निष्कम्भा मायकेरान्तरेदिदाम् ॥

<sup>1</sup>(a). शेषाधुवाभ्यर्च्युं के तेतोमुहनेदसोऽ-  
यम् । तस्यावरोदितस्यहो कर्षकर्मसमायम् ॥  
[Yājñavalkya Smṛiti.] (b) Mr Lead-  
beater says, "All the ghastly para-  
phernalia of woe (the suton, the  
plumes, the black velvet, the crepe,  
the mourning garments, the black  
edged note paper, all these are  
nothing more than advertisements  
of ignorance on the part of those  
who employ them. The man who  
begins to understand what death  
is at once puts aside all this mas-  
querade as childish folly, seeing

that to mourn over the good fortune  
of his friend merely because it in-  
volves for himself the pain of an  
apparent separation from that  
friend, becomes, as soon as it is  
recognized, a display of selfishness."  
[I'p. 59-60. *Outline of Theosophy*.]  
(c) Read St Paul's Epistles to the  
Thessalonians IV, 12 to 17 of which  
I quote thus: "And we will not  
have you ignorant, brothers, con-  
cerning them that are asleep, that  
you be not sorrowful, &c. And 17  
"Wherefore comfort you one an-  
other with these words."

<sup>1</sup>The following authorities may of be use to our readers on this subject :

कर्षकर्मसुखदं नामभाष्यमेवम् ।

मरुतकःपुनाकेन स्नायकेरिपुनःकुम् ॥

Our Elders repeat the following beautiful verse in praise of Kūrēṣa on his birth day every year :—

अर्थाच्चोपपत्तसंसारसिद्धयर्थमाश्रित्यपूर्वपूर्वाप्यन्तययुगगतदेहि कामुकिमायु ।  
सांप्रदायानुलभुनिर्दिष्टीयतु किंकरस्यायत्सम्भवादप्युक्तकथं सर्वत्रैकुराच ॥

'How can Kūrēṣa be fitly praised, by [whom even Rāmānuja's salvation is made sure, Rāmānuja, who is the sure passport to others' salvation ?].

Tradition says that while Rāmānuja or (Lakshmanāchārya) is Lakshmana himself of the Rāmāyana fame, Kūrēṣa is Rāma himself, born again to render back to Lakshmana, all the services which Lakshmana rendered to him in those by-gone days

It is said that without Kūrēṣa, Rāmānuja would not have been what he has been. A P. Emberrumāvar sang the praises of Rāmānuja in his Drāvula Rāmānuja nutraṇ-dāḍi, in imitation of Āndhra-Pārua's Sanskrit Rāmānuja-Āṣṭottara, but when Rāmānuja heard it, he rejected it as it contained no reference to Kūrēṣa. Verse 7 "Mozhiya" was then introduced. Then the hymn was sanctioned and assigned a place along with the 4,000 Prabandhas.

Foot note on page 230 (continued).

केलवर्षितसर्वोक्तं हरिरंगलावहं ।  
वक्षुपादाहयोदयो ब्रह्ममेधारेभिर्विना ॥  
ब्रह्ममेधवत्तपोक्तं मुनिभिर्ब्रह्मतत्त्वैः ।  
महाभागवतामोहि कर्तव्यमेवमुक्तमयम् ॥  
नातत्परतरं तैर्वै वैष्णवैर्ब्रह्मलाकुषम् ।  
तेषां पादोदकं पुरुषं गङ्गापि पुत्रातिहि ॥  
कुभादौ हि ज्वरेणैव सर्वस्य च्छुभावहं ।  
सहस्रशालाभयनं कारिष्यद्विष्णोः तमम् ॥  
अमुभाभेनो वसुदेव द्वाभ्यां हीनोऽसंहिता ।  
अभेन शशिजनेन राज्ञो चाद्यां नानाभिनी ॥  
वृन्नादादौ त्वयैव त्वेन द्वाभिर्यत्नसहस्रिणी ।  
अद्यैतन्मया हि जयति राक्षसी तसहस्रिणी ॥  
यद्यातुः प्रसिद्धिर्देवैर्लो महाभागवताचनोत्त ।  
यद्यातुः प्रसिद्धिर्देवैर्मुनिभिस्तत्स्वार्थनादयै ॥

1 See foot note 1 on page 275.

## CHAPTER XXXVI

## RĀMĀNUJA'S LAST DAYS.

Parāttara-Bhattārya, or Bhattārya shortly the son of Kūrēsa, had now come to the estate of his father, *spiritual estate*. Rāmānuja of course knew from the moment of Bhattārya's entry into this world, that he was destined to be the apostle of the Viśvātmādvaita Dispensation:—having been presented to the world by Lord Rāganātha Himself as His own (God) son. Providence designed that Kūrēsa should make his exit from the episcopal stage: for he was too saintly and retired from the world to be an active worker, the requisite for a propagandist. Bhattārya was of this type. So Rāmānuja led the budding young man one morning to the Holy Temple, to present him formally to the Lord, so as to make him the anointed, to authoritatively transmit to posterity the great Message he had brought from Heaven. Rāmānuja led then this juvenile apostle-delegate to the Lord, and presented him. We again repeat and confirm our God fatherhood to thee, son. We consecrate it by giving thee this tarmaric water to drink. Grieve not for the loss of our Kūrēsa, thy Father, for we stand to you in that position, more so even." So spoke the Lord. Rāmānuja interrupted—"Majestic Lord! Bless this acorn with long life, and I will give him all education." Lord Ranga did not deign to reply but simply gave them leave with his blessings, symbolized by the sowing of *turika* and *prāsada*. Rāmānuja returned to his ace and calling Embār (Govinda-Jiyar), assigned to him the sacred task of preparing Bhattārya thoroughly for the position he was to occupy, by a complete course of studies, in doctrine as well as discipline. After thus discharging the sacred trust which had been vested in him, Rāmānuja settled down once more quietly, to spend his time usefully in imparting instruction to his large congregation in Bhāshya and Bhagavad-viśhaya.

Kandāda-Āndāa, the son of Dātārathi, one day approached Rāmānuja reverently and said:—"Holy Sir, thou art to us in this Kali-Age, God Himself incarnate, come on this earth to establish Dharma, like Lord Krishna in Dvāpara-Age. If

परित्याग' is said to Him, then art पुनरात्मोन्नतिकारक एव-अन्तर्भावय । श्रीमानपितृद्वयो उपायुजदिवार \* Rāmānuja the Son, incarnated, to open the lotus of virtue, and dissipate the darkness of vice " So, Holy Father, permit us to instal in Sri Perambūdūr (Bhūta-puri), thy image, that all posterity to the end of time may be enabled to know thee, love thee and serve thee as their Saviour and secure their salvation " Rāmānuja granted the prayer Andān accordingly brought a stationary to atoly Rāmānuja's figure and reproduce it in metal This was done and shown to Rāmānuja He scanned it closely from top to bottom Being satisfied,<sup>1</sup> he embraced the statue pouring into it all the spiritual power and grace he had possessed, for the benefit of posterity and commanded that it be installed in Bhūta-puri in the month of Pūshya when Jupiter could be in that constellation \* Andān carried the Image on state to Bhūta-puri and installed it along with the Mula or fixed Image, sculptured out of stone, exactly in the month and on the day fixed by Rāmānuja. As the installation ceremonies were being proceeded with at Bhūta-puri, Rāmānuja at Srirangam was suddenly taken ill He was startled at this, but recollecting that that was the moment his Image was being inaugurated at Bhūta-puri, understood the meaning of his illness This he also took as a foreboding of the end of his stay on earth and the completion of his vocation He therefore sent a message to Andān to return immediately Andān obeyed the summons and joined Rāmānuja.

Rāmānuja had thus all his band of disciples and devotees remain by his side, and gave them the quintessence of his teachings thus — "Listen, sons beloved," began he, "Men are of three distinct types, the lion ward (*prahāṇa*) the God-against (*pratikāṇa*) and the God-indifferent (*anubhāṇa*) The first type

<sup>1</sup> Bhagavad-gītā IV 2.

<sup>2</sup> The figure answered the description —

“पुनर्देष्टुं शोभयितुं किलिख्यते देवो न भयं विदित  
 सावयं कश्चिदप्यतीतकृषिं देवैर्भूतवाक्यमुच्यते ।  
 वासीदेवसज्जलनैव मुनिरुत्तमं वाचमासाकृत  
 मुन्यवाक्यमुदकरात्पिदेवैर्भीमाश्चकार भवे ॥

It is of this image, the frontispiece to this work

<sup>3</sup> This star, it is significant, is the star of Sri Rāma's coronation

are the Sri-Vaishnavas, the second are the antithetists, and the third are the worldly (*amoretists*). If you meet with the men of the first class, joy as if you found flowers, scents, aromatics and so forth, as if the blush of moonshine spread about you, and zephyrs softly crept over you, as if you met your own most near and dear kith and kin. If you come across men of the second stamp, fear as if you faced a venomous reptile, fire and so forth. If you chance to meet men of the third description, mind them not as you would not mind the stocks and stones that lie on your way. If you discover willingness in them, teach them things of the spirit, if otherwise, treat them with pity. Why these men are turned away from God is because of their love for lust and lucre.

If out of pride consequent on lust and lucre, men condemn Sri-Vaishnavas it is nothing short of contempt for God Himself. If to such pride, holy men descend to paying courtship, it is like the king's wife wandering in the streets for begging. If to *something*, holy men allow themselves to be lured on account of their wealth and so forth, vain is their wisdom, as they have not learnt to distinguish between gem and glass. *वदिनामात्रम्, कवचनमङ्गलैस्तृणैर्विषम्, वानप्रस्थिचित्तत्त्वान्विशे। यथैकेष्टुर्केन, परमन्मोरर्धवद्वन्द्ववचान्तर, मेवमनुपरिषर्षपरिषवः।* There are six ways by which you can usefully spend your days. 1. Read Sri Bhāṣya and teach it to others. 2. If that is above your level, read Tiruvāimozhi and make others read it. 3. If that is beyond your ken, build a hut in any holy land, and live there. 4. If that is impracticable, do services in a Temple. 5. If that is inconvenient, dwell ever on the profound truths contained in the Holy Draya Mantra. 6. If that also is difficult, take shelter or service under a holy man.

Rāṇānuja now sent for all the servants of the Blessed Fame of Rauga, and addressed them thus—"O Faithful Servants of our Lord, my time is over, and my services in your company have to come to an end. In the performance of my duties with you, I may have offended some and pained others. As I am now about to leave you, it is acceing that I ask of you, one and all, to forgive me for my short-comings." "Holy Sir," said they all in one voice. "Why do you speak

thus to us your humble servants? your speech is strange—not only strange, but drives fear into our breasts! You, beloved father, to leave us orphans? You, the soul of the world, to leave us lifeless corpses?" "Speak not so, sons," said Rāmānuja, comforting them.—'Ye lose nothing by losing me; for there is Your Lord Ranga here, ever present, and who never leaves you. He is *asleep* sleeping on his serpent-couch and steadily gazing to the South,—for his Bhakta, Vibhishana dwells there. Never be sparing in your services to Him. Be vigilant and devout. I wish you all the constant company of the Lord's own elect, the Sri Vaishnavas. Farewell." So exhorting them and assigning to select disciples the care of the different sections of his large following, Sri Rāmānuja led Bhattārya to Lord Ranga's presence, and let him receive the *tirtha* and *prasāda*, prior to him signifying by this act that Bhattārya was to be the Head of the Sri Vaishnava Church after his departure—and turning to his disciples, said—"Gentle folk, he shall be next to me in succession. Look upon him as such." Turning to Bhattārya, he said:—"Son, there is a servant of repute, by name Vedānta in the uplands (Mysore). Go there, win him by polemics, and convert him to our Faith." After thus consecrating Bhattārya, Rāmānuja returned to his Math, and once more addressing the assembly of his disciples, commanded them not to stray from the Path when he passed away, not to take his loss so much to heart as to interfere with the due performance of duties falling to their share, "for," said he, "you will then forfeit your connection with me, Mahāpūrṇa and Yāmuna, and you will moreover act contrary to the will of our St. Śaṅkara. Approach me, then, each of you, and swear by my holy feet, that you will carry out my behests, and will never swerve from the line of virtue, I have marked out for you all."

Rāmānuja now commanded that they should retire and return after eating of the consecrated food prepared for them. They obeyed, and when they returned, Sri Rāmānuja gave his last words and last blessings, and withdrawing himself gently,—as if he was falling into a quiet natural sleep—closed his eyes, and laid himself down, his head turned towards the

Temple, and rested on the lap of Kumbār, and feet placed on the lap of Vāṇa-pūṇṇa (Āndra-pūṇṇa)

The whole Srirangam and his wife crowded to the Math to witness the last moments of the Great Rāmānuja. A party of the elders, in solemn tones, sang the Brahmavallī and the Bhṛiguvalth of the Vedas, and another party sang the hymns of the Drāvida-Prahaṇḍhas. As they watched Rāmānuja lying in state, their hearts beating with the importance of the supreme moment, the crown of his head (at the pineal-gland)<sup>1</sup> burst and the holy Ambassador of God winged his way back to the Native Land the feed souls, the Empyrean of the perfect.

Like the mighty trees of the forest, uprooted and blown down by the fierce blasts of the hurricane, did the assembly fall flat on the ground, senseless; when to recovering sense only to feel all the more the keen agony of their irreparable loss, followed by an uproarious outburst of grief, unparalleled by any other event of the kind. Torrents fell from their blinded eyes, and they ejaculated inarticulate words from their choked throats shaking with passion, and in short, their limbs lay as if bereft of motion by the paralytic stroke dealt by Rāmānuja's passing away from the sphere of his labours, up to Heaven, His Native Home. —to enjoy that unutterable rest there the reward of all the benefactors of mankind. "Indeed," cried they, "have we realized the truth of श्रीमद्," and श्रीमद् i.e., when you sprang into our midst, we obtained the 'light of knowledge', and now your exit envelops us in the 'gloom of evil.'"<sup>2</sup>

When Rāmānuja's Grand Gora Yāmuṇā-bhārya ascended to Heaven, a routine of observances and sacraments, processions and interment was gone through as prescribed by the Śāstras for a Vaiṣṇava and a Sanyāsin. All this, even to winter elaborations, and greater detail was solemnly gone through. Thus passed away the Great Rāmānuja.

<sup>1</sup> The Brahma raudira

<sup>2</sup> This is a stenogram indicating the birth-date of Rāmānuja Saka, 939 (1017 A.C.)

<sup>3</sup> Another stenogram indicating the date of his departure Saka 1059 (1137 A.C.)



## CHAPTER XXXVII.

## RĀMĀNUJA'S GREATNESS.

' Endless are the incidents in the Chapters of Rāmānuja's life. It would be impossible to record them all. Only the salient features have been recorded." so says our chronicler, Pin-baḷagā Perumāl-Jiyar. He collects now in one summarized compass all the evidences eloquently testifying to the greatness of Rāmānuja.

1. Lord Ranga declared with his own lips that all the riches of the Kingdom of Heaven as well as of earth were placed at Rāmānuja's disposal.

2. Lord Srinivāsa confirmed this grant by His holy word also, and to prove that this was not mere flattery, it is written that a milkmaid by name Tumbayūṇi Kondi, was supplying curds to Rāmānuja. When he was once on his way to Tirupati, the woman appeared and presented her bill for payment. Rāmānuja commanded Kidāmbi-Īcchan to give her food in the Math. She ate and coming to Rāmānuja, prostrated to him and submitted to him that she had a favour to ask. He bade her ask it. She said "Holy sire, I desire not payment in coin for my curds, but grant me Moksha instead" 1

"But that power I possess not," replied Rāmānuja, "Lord Srinivāsa alone can grant thy prayer." "Then give me a written permit, sire, to take to the Lord" asked she. Rāmānuja, over-come by her faith, gave her one. She forthwith ascended the Sacred Mount, but she had hardly reached the summit, before the Lord Himself met her on the way, and receiving the permit, gave her Moksha on the spot.

3. Lord Varadarāja of Kāñchipara proved Rāmānuja on two occasions, when He appeared once in Yādava-prakāśa's dream and commanded that circumambulation of the world enjoined for a would-be Saṅgyāsin was accomplished by once circumambulating round Rāmānuja, and when hot de-

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1 i.e., Liberation.

lates on philosophy waged between Rāmānuja and Yajña-mūrti, and the latter was scoring points for victory, the Lord appeared in Rāmānuja's dream and suggested certain Vedic passages<sup>1</sup> being quoted as those would level the adversary to the ground. Next morning the opponent was vanquished.

4. Lord Nārāyaṇa of Melukote, proved Rāmānuja by His showing the way for Rāmānuja's future in a dream when he was staying at Tondanūr; and further condescending to assume the position of a loved Son to Rāmānuja—Sampat-kumāra

5. Lord Sundara-Rāja of the Azhagar-Hill near Madura, proved by summoning one day all the disciples of Rāmānuja before Him. They obeyed, but the kinsmen of Mahā pūrṇa (the Āchārya of Rāmānuja), stopped away. Pūrṇa asked them why. "We are your kinsmen, are n't we? And Rāmānuja is our disciple therefore," said they. The Lord on hearing this spoke—"Your taking Rāmānuja for a disciple is only matched by Daśarathi and Vasudeva taking Rāma and Kṛishṇa for their sons respectively. On another occasion Kidāmbi-ācchān repeated before the Lord the verse *Aparādha ...*<sup>2</sup> in which the expression *agatiḥ* 'wayless' occurs. "How darcest thou utter this," interrupted the Lord, "when thou hast Rāmānuja for thy 'way'?"

6. Nambi, the Lord of Tiru-k-karungudī, proved by expressing surprise that Rāmānuja should be able to bring many souls to God's fold, while He Himself could not ac-

<sup>1</sup> मनुष्येषु तस्यैव तस्यैव तस्यैव तस्यैव तस्यैव तस्यैव ॥

[Mand-Up. II, 2-4. Dhyaṇa-B. Up. 19.]

(\*) अथाधसहस्रात्मनः पतितेषामपार्थिवोत्तरे ।

मर्गतिष्ठत्वागतद्वरे कृपयाकेवलस्यैव सत्कुरु ॥

[Stotra—Rāgas by Yāmunā.]

"Freighted alas! with a thousand sinner,  
A wreck in the dreadful sea of death, I pine '  
Lost is my way, O Lord, my God!  
I yield me up to thee;  
Thy grace alone must save,  
Ah! make me thine."

compleish so much, despite His repeated Incarnations<sup>1</sup> on earth; and He retired every time sad with the thought that souls were more prone to roll down and down into the depths of *saṁsāra*, than climb up to Him<sup>2</sup>. "Wouldest Thou know the secret, Lord?" said Rāmānuja, 'then put thyself in the position of a disciple.' Nambī did so, and Rāmānuja whispered the secret of his success into the Lord's ear, and ever afterwards, Nambī prided Himself on this kind of spiritual tie established with Rāmānuja.

7 St Nammāzhvār felt so much compassion for the sinful world that he laid a wager with God Himself. "See, Lord, I shall convert the world unto Thee"<sup>3</sup>. "Know they not Thy Greatness, that I should tell?"<sup>4</sup> and so forth. But when he saw the world averse to his preaching, he retired disappointed, crying "Is it possible for me to correct this large world?"<sup>5</sup>, "Enough, myself and my mind have yielded to Him"<sup>6</sup>. But again when he looked forth into the future, he saw hope and exultingly cried — "This dark world shall yet be set right. Yet, this dark age shall bring salvation"<sup>7</sup>. Thus did this Saint, refer to the advent of Rāmānuja, as the coming Messiah. Sage Nāthamuniḡal prophesied Rāmānuja's advent by saying 'A pinah may quench a sparrow's thirst, but a loch will feed a vāle.'<sup>8</sup> By loch he symbolized Rāmānuja. Embār sang this by the following beautiful metaphor—

சரபோனாசாகயசிந்நீசுந்ரபுரமதபாயகாஹயவீரீ ।

காசகாசம் வந்தரதயுரபுரம்தொவசுமீராமாபா ॥

மலாலாபாபு நம ஸி நிமயயசிந்நாக்யநாகரேந்

சமாயுபாதிந்நகரமதநிநராமுந்நிகந்நரீசீ ॥

<sup>1</sup> வரநிவேஸீராதநி &c. [Bh. Gitā, II, 5]

<sup>2</sup> அமுரீயோநிபாயகா &c., [Bh. Gitā, XVI, 20]

<sup>3</sup> சிவகண்டவெண்கலையுருகிபட்டுன. [T. Viruttam 16.]

<sup>4</sup> ஏ ! ஸம்ம பரமே ! [T. Vāymozhi, II, 2-2.]

<sup>5</sup> அகவிடத்தையாஃமது அதுதிருத்தனவடுத! [P. T. Andādi, 26.]

<sup>6</sup> ஸ நுமெனனெஞ்சுநினைநதொழிகடெதம் [P. T. Andādi, 30.]

<sup>7</sup> சமியுமெதம்கண்டெனவையின [T. Vāymozhi, I, 2-1.]

"குடபயமுந்நெதெனினும் குருதிருடி துட்டெம்

வீராரணபுரத்தேதிரிலெதெனினெனவெனியும்."

8. Yāmunāchārya when he was at Kāochī-pura on a visit, and saw Rāmānuja, following in the train of Yādava prakāsa, pointed him out to his disciples, saying — "Look, He will be the first leader of our faith."

9. Mahāpūrṇa proved Rāmānuja's greatness thus — One day he and his daughter Attulāy-anuma, were seated in their house, when Rāmānuja happened to enter with his train of disciples. Mahāpūrṇa at once got up and prostrated himself before him. His daughter asked him how he could do such an act of obeisance to Rāmānuja, who was his disciple. Pūrṇa replied "Those feet and this head are a match to each other."<sup>1</sup> Another day Rāmānuja was returning from his bath in the Kāveri when Mahāpūrṇa meeting him did obeisance. But Rāmānuja stood erect instead of returning this customary homage, and simply lifted up his Gura. Rāmānuja's disciples asked him to explain his unusual conduct. He said, "My Gura wishes to please hims lf by honoring me. If that is his pleasure, it is my pleasure. I should not cross him." The disciples next asked Pūrṇa to explain his unusual behaviour. "He said — "Sure, I saw in Rāmānuja my own Gura— Yāmunā after my own Gura, all the perfections of a Gura find their haven in Rāmānuja." And Pūrṇa made his own son Pondarī-kāka the disciple of Rāmānuja.

10. It has already been related, that Gorāhī pūrṇa—the second Gura of Rāmānuja,—revealed the secrets of religion to Rāmānuja by exacting a promise that he would not impart the same to others, but that Rāmānuja broke the promise soon by openly declaring the secrets to all in the Temple, that Pūrṇa became wroth on coming to know this and demanding an explanation from Rāmānuja, the latter confessed his fault, but sub-

<sup>1</sup> Sachajit the Cloud, from Sri's Sea of Grace  
Drook deep, rises down on Nātha Hl i,  
Rāma, Padmāvatī, two rills thence rippling down  
Unite in Yāmunā-Brook, to gulf  
Yatirāja's Lotus-Lake, by countless Floodgates  
To flood the Pastures of parched souls.

"ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय"

mitted that if his disobedience did entail on him hell, he had the satisfaction of thinking that thousands were saved—a great price to get in return—and that Pūrṇa, on hearing this embraced Rāmānuja exclaiming ‘What a large heart thine for others, my shallow heart did not warm like this. Thou art no other than he (Yāmunā)’ And he made his son Terk-alvār, Rāmānuja’s disciple.

11. Tirumalai-Nambū or Sṛīṣaṣṭa Pūrṇa—another Guru—it has already been narrated, replied,—when questioned by Rāmānuja why an elderly person like himself came to meet him on his way up the Holy Hill of Tirupatī, when there were many young persons, any one of whom he could have despatched,—that with respect to Rāmānuja, he could find no other person younger than himself. And further Pūrṇa made a gift of Embār to Rāmānuja, and made his son Rāmānuja to become his disciple.

12. Tirumalai-Āndān or Mālādhara—another Guru—was teaching Tiruvāymozhi to Rāmānuja. When the verse ‘Āpyāk-kālattu’ [II 33], was explained, Rāmānuja gave his own interpretations. This gave offence, the Guru ceasing to teach. Goshikṣi Pūrṇa, coming to hear of this speedily appeared on the scene, and gave Mālādhara to understand that Rāmānuja’s interpretations were correct, as they were those of Yāmunā-chārya, and that he must look upon Rāmānuja in the light of such a disciple as Lord Kṛṣṇa was to Sāṇḍīya. On another occasion, when Rāmānuja, gave out an explanation, which, he said, was according to Yāmunā, “thou hast never spoken to Yāmunā, how dost thou know?” cried Mālādhara. “Sire” replied Rāmānuja, “am I not Ēkalavya to Yāmunā?” The Guru anon fell on the ground, saying ‘Indeed thou art an avatāra,” and made his son Sundarabāhu, Rāmānuja’s disciple.

13. Rāmānuja did humble service to the venerable Tiruvāranga-p-perumāl-Arāiyar, when the latter, one day, said.—“The price of thy services, Rāmānuja, is my all”, and he taught him the secrets of the Fifth Way (Pañcham-opāya), and made his son Tiruvāymozhi Arāiyar his disciple.

14. Āndhra-Pūrṇa was a firm believer in this Fifth Way, which to him was the Holy Feet of Rāmānuja.

15. Kanyanūr Sīri-y-ācchān, declared on oath (i.e., when remaining half immersed in water) that faith in Rāmānuja was the only road to salvation.

16. Yajñanūrti (a convert from Advaitism), whom Rāmānuja set up in a separate *śeṣ*, as abbot, and to be looked upon as a second Rāmānuja, declared to his intimate disciples, Eechān, Annadālvān, Tondanūr-Nambi and Marudūr-Nambi that Rāmānuja was the real Saviour, and his second Rāmānuja-ship was only a gracious honor bestowed on him, inasmuch as he felt it as a millstone hung round a sparrow's neck.

17. Pillai-p-pillai-y-āshvān became the disciple of Kūrēsa. The latter when asked his pastoral fee (*ācharya-dakṣhiṇa*), stated it as the curbing by him of his three instruments of thought, speech and deed against offending holy men. But the disciple found it very difficult to carry this advice into practice, and evinced great perplexity Kūrēsa observing it, called him and said:—"Here is a way out of thy difficulty, son! Thou canst avoid hurt by deed, for thy foe will return it, or the king will punish for it. Thou canst avoid hurtful speech, if thou wishest to keep peace with the world, for so says a stanza:—*यदी-प्रतिपक्षीकृतं जगदेकनक्ष-  
त्रम् । परावदस्ये-यो गन्तव्यीतिरात् ।* This is to thy advantage. There remains now thy thought which is difficult to curb. Hence if thou wishest thy mental man not to offend God, trust to Rāmānuja's feet for reconciliation.

18. Milag-āshvān challenged Dāsarathi for a debate. The latter consented and asked for a wager. "If I am beaten," said Āshvān, "I will carry thee on my shoulders." This was agreed to, and Dāsarathi won. Āshvān, true to his word lifted the victor on to his shoulders, ran a few paces, and setting him down asked forgiveness for his impudence. Dāsarathi lead him to Rāmānuja, and said "There is thy forgiveness—his holy feet."

19. Embār counselled Bhattārya thus—"Son, vaunt not thyself that thou art the Godson of Lord Ranga, Kūrēsa's son, and a servant. Faith in Rāmānuja alone will save thee."

20. Bhaṭṭārya counselled Nāṣṭiyar thus — "Son! pique thyself not on being a great Vedāntist, on thy becoming my disciple, and on thy giving up all thy wealth to me, as my fee. But firmly believe in Rāmānuja as our Saviour."

21. Nāṣṭiyar warned Nambillai thus — "Grow not haughty that the world calls thee 'World teacher' (Lokāchārya), that thou art a clever expert in expounding the Prabandhas Rāmānuja's feet alone can save thee."

22. One day Nambillai took hold of the hand of Siva-kurāt-piḷḷai, to go out, and as he crossed the threshold of his house, he discovered a holy man asleep on the pal outside. S piḷḷai called out to him to withdraw his legs as his master was there. Nambillai immediately let go his hold of S piḷḷai saying — "Son, our saints have declared that the legs of holy men are *holy* legs. To call them "legs" in derision is against thee a proof of disrespect and ignorance. Begone from me." S. piḷḷai went to his village in disgrace and set up loud wailing, and cried — "Oh master! thou hast cast me away like the stone in a sling, from thy holy place between the two rivers." Nambillai on hearing this repentance, sent for him and enjoined — "Trust in Rāmānuja, all thy faults are remitted."

23. Tiru-k-kurugai-p-parāṇ Pillān was once in a place called Sira-p-puttār. Sōmāsi-y-Āṇḍān read Sri-Bhāshya under him three times. Pillān left the place for his native country, when Āṇḍān pleaded — "Sire, I live in this country far from you. Deign to tell me the choicest article of faith for my life." To this Pillān replied — "Son, keep off intemescence that comes of thy ability to descend on the science of Pūrva-Mīmāṃsā, and to discourse on Sri-Bhāshya, but place implicit faith in our Saviour Rāmānuja." And Gomathattha-p-piḷḷai bade in a similar manner his disciple Kakkai-p-pāḍi y-acchan-Piḷḷai.

24. "When God was angry with you, what didst thou do?" asked Engal Āshvān of K. P. A. Piḷḷai. "I resorted at such times to the appeasing power vested in our Saviour, Rāmānuja," he replied.

25. A coterie of disciples read *Sri-Bhāshya* under *Nadā-dūr-Ammāl*. They asked —“ Father, *Bhakti* (love to God), we find is a hard thing to do.” *Ammāl* taught them the way of *Prapatti* (faith in God). They again pleaded. “Sire, it is hard to get faith.” “Then,” taught *Ammāl*, “your only way is to depend on *Rāmānuja*.” *Naduvil Āṣṭvān* administered similar instructions to his disciples *Vaṅkipuratt ācchi* and others.

26. “This is a mighty torrent, this *Sri-Bhāshya*,” complained the *Aimbatt-iravar* (52) magnates of *Tirunārāyaṇa-puram* (*Mēlukote*) when *Veda-vyāsa-Bhaṭṭar* expatiated on it before *Rāmānuja*'s shrine in the Temple. “Then,” said *Bhaṭṭar*, “trust solely to your household-God *Rāmānuja*, and that is enough.” So again did *Naduvil-Tiruvēdhi p. pillai-Bhaṭṭar* comfort his disciple *Elaiya v-alagiṣār*.

27. *Āndhra-pūṣṇa* often reproached *Kūrēṣa* and *Dāṣa-rathi* for double heartedness inasmuch as they wavered in their devotion between God and *Rāmānuja*, the *Śariora*, whereas he was single hearted as being firm in his trust in the latter alone.

28. The devil *Brahma-rakshas* signified *Rāmānuja*'s greatness, by so declaring it to *Yādava-prakāśa* :

29. The dumb lad was another illustration. He was born in *Kāñchipuram*, dumb. After his fifth year he was found missing for two years. He suddenly appeared again. People surrounded him and questioned him as to whither he had gone. He replied that he had been charmed away to *Kṣhīrābdhi* (*Milky Sea*). “What is the news there,” asked they. “The only news of any importance,” said he, “was that on earth an *avatār* in the shape of *Rāmānuja* has descended.” The boy was not seen again, after he delivered this message. This story, the holy *Bhagavat-senāpati-Jiṣar* took pride in often relating, to vouch farther for the greatness of *Rāmānuja*.

30. As among Divine Incarnations, those of *Rāma* and *Kṛṣṇa* are notable, *Vyāsa*, *Parāśara*, *Suka*, and *Sannaka* among the *Rishis*, *Srirangam*, *Tirupati*, *Kāñchi* and *Mēlukote*



among the Holy places, St. Nammālvār among the Saints, so is Rāmānuja among the Āchāryas (Apostles), such as Nāthamuni

31 The importance of Rām-Āvatāra consists in Rāmā's declaring the Divine Gift of Free Grace to all who may approach Him, irrespective of caste or creed, color or condition, in seeking friendship of humble folk like Guha, in performing the obsequies of a Brāhmana for Jatāyu, in accepting food from the hands of a Sāhan, in eating in the company of Hanumān, and so forth.<sup>1</sup>

The importance of Kṛṣṇa-Āvatāra consists in Kṛṣṇa's delivering the Apocalypse of Bhagavad-gītā, with its Charana-Sloka,<sup>2</sup> in rejecting the hospitality of Dūtishra and Drona for that of Vidura;<sup>3</sup> and so forth

The reputation of Srīraṅgam comes of Lord Rāga's having mixed with the (Pariah) Saint Tiruppānar, as intimately as body and soul; that of Tirupati comes of Lord Srinivāsa's having spoken to and moved freely with such souls as Bhīma, (Kurumb-arutta-nambi), the potter, and Tondaiman, that of Kāñchi (Perumāl kōil) comes of Lord Varada's having been so intimate with Kāñchi pūma, that of Melukote, of Lord Nārāyaṇa's having eaten of the food offered by Sucharita's son, and of His having deigned to become the son of Rāmānuja—hence called Yatirāja-sampat-kumāra

The distinction earned by Veda-Vyāsa is because of his Vedānta-Sūtras and the Śātvika Purāṇas, by all of which he proclaimed the Ultimate Truth by his finishing stanza —

सत्यं सत्यं पुनस्तत्त्वं अमुत्पद्यमुच्यते ।

देवतास्वात्मनोऽस्मिन् नैवेदं केनैवात्मनः ॥

<sup>1</sup> I declare, once, twice, thrice.

<sup>1</sup> See Rāmāyana.

<sup>2</sup> Gītā, XVIII, 66.

<sup>3</sup> विदुराचारिणमुमुक्षे शुचीनिगुणप्रतिपत्तौ &c., [Dhārata, Udyoga Parva.]

विषदधनमोक्तव्यं विषजन्मैवमोक्षयेत्.

There is no Scripture like the Veda, nor God like Kṛṣṇā.<sup>1</sup> that earned by Parāśara is because of his Viṣṇu-purāṇa,<sup>2</sup> in which he gives a clear definition of the Three Eternal Verities, God, Soul and Matter,—hence styled by Sage Yāmuna as 'The Magnificent,'<sup>3</sup> that earned by Suka is by his Bhāgavata by declaring in it the greatness of Viṣṇu and his earning immediate mokṣa, मुक्त्यर्थः that earned by Śaṅkara is by his famous work Viṣṇu Dharma, that earned by Nārada is because of his declaration as the slave of the holy Viṣṇu-nama.<sup>4</sup> The distinction of St. Namamāshvar arises from his composing four Prabandhas analogous to the Four Vedas, thus popularising Scripture, and his revealing to Sage Nāthamuni the Four-Thousand Prabandhas, thus establishing the Viṣṇuava Dispensation. Out above all towers the reputation of Rāmānuja, inasmuch as he unboasted to all, the Holy Sense of the Charama-Sloka, made clear the obscure and abstruse texts of the Vedas, made manifest the truths of St. Namamāshvar's Tirucāymozhi, wrote exegetics on Brahma-Sūtras according to the Canons established by Sages Nāthamuni and Yāmuna in their Treatises, wrote other independent works such as the Gadyatraya, won victories over false prophets and philosophers thus bequeathing to posterity a system pre-eminently known as Rāmānuja's system, though it is a system of thought co-eternal with God Himself.

32. Rāmānuja was one day conducting his ministry in his congregation, taking up the Doctrine of God's Free Grace to frail humanity, as illustrated by Rāmāyana. Viḍḍihahana, though born among the demons (Rākṣhasas), was angelic in nature. He tried to dissuade his brother Bārāṇa from his evil ways, but he would not listen, so he severed himself swiftly

<sup>1</sup> वेदेषुतेहं ह्येकं धर्मज्ञानमेवमुपगमय ।

भारतेनगवद्गीता पुराणेषुष्वैक्यवत् ॥

<sup>2</sup> तत्त्वैवकथित्विहीनान्तत्त्वव मोक्षपवर्गसङ्गणकमतीदृशम् ।

कर्मवर्गविपरिवर्तितपुण्यवर्गं तत्त्वैवमोक्षविस्तारपराहारात् ॥ [Sloka Ratna, 4.]

<sup>3</sup> मुक्त्यर्थमपि विहीनैरङ्गितं कथयति यो परमपुरुषकामादीर्नैव कथयति

इत्युत्तरमपि पुरुषसङ्गतमेव कथयति ते कथयिष्यमिवाज्ञातकथयत्यपि कथयति ॥

from all connection with him, and soaring into the sky, crossed the ocean with four attendants and coming to Lord Rāma, who was encamped with his army on the other shore, cried thus :—

‘O Rāma,’ thus he cried, ‘in me  
Vibhishan, Rāvān’s brother, see  
By him disgraced thine aid I seek,  
Sure refuge of the poor and weak.  
From Lankā, friends, and wealth I fly.  
And rest of all on Thee rely.  
On Thee, the wretch’s firmest friend,  
My kingdom, joys and life depend [Rāmāyana, VI, 19.]

\* \*

I left my children and my wife  
And fly to Raghu’s son for life. [Rāmāyana, VI, 17.]

And yet the Vānar-chiefs of Lord Rāma said to Him—  
‘Rāma’

We wait thy word : the order give  
And these thy foes shall cease to live.  
Command us, mighty king, and all,  
Lifeless upon the earth shall fall. [Rāmāyana, VI, 17.]

On hearing this, Dhānurdāsa stood up and cried :—  
“Godsire, if Vibhishana, who left wife, children and all in order to seek refuge with Rāma, deserved to be stoned by Rāma’s Vānar-chiefs, how much more indeed do I deserve that treatment,—I, who have made no renunciation at all like Vibhishana !” “Peace,” cried Rāmānuja, “Listen to me, my son, I will unfold to thee the secrets of salvation. Śrī, the spouse of Lord Nārāyaṇa, ever stands by Him as our Mother-mediator. She is the personification of the most exalted attribute of God, viz. Grace or Mercy<sup>1</sup> When our Lord through Śrī is ever anxious to shower His mercy unstintingly on His erring children on earth, what fear is there for us ?

<sup>1</sup> Śrī also symbolizes love of God for man and love of man for God, She ever dwells in the bosom of God, like the Christ, the Son [John I. 13.]

We have an unbroken chain of apostles, reaching down to us from God, of which the first link is God, and His Grace, Sri, the next. St Sathagopa is the next important link, and he has declared in unmistakable terms that he has obtained Heaven (moksha).<sup>1</sup> If he has won it, Nāthamuni has won, if Nāthamuni has won, Yāmuna has won, Yāmuna winning my next guru above me, Mahapūrṇa, has won. If Pūrṇa has won, I have surely won. When I have, ye have all indeed won. Take comfort then from this thought. Dvaya-Mantra, which I have taught thee, declares, as thou art aware, the indissoluble unity of God with His Grace, Sri, and an unbroken chain binds God and His creatures in one bond, from which it is impossible to escape and stand aloof. With me goes my flock. What I share it undoubtedly shares. The areca tree is watered by the gardener but the plantain trees round it take the moisture as well. I and my church are linked together for one testing. My destiny shall invariably be its destiny. When Viśvishāma was after all allowed to approach Lord Rāma, no separate invitation to the four Rākshasa-men, who accompanied with him, was needed, nor when the Vānara-chiefs wished to drive him away, did they think of driving those four persons separately. In other words, the four persons counted with Viśvishāma as one, in gains or losses. Even thus counts my flock with me. Hence, son, thou mayst rest assured that if Heaven is mine, it is thine without question. As St Bhaktasīra has said, 'the flock has even more merit than the shepherd,'<sup>2</sup> Satrugna has more merit in following Bharata, than Bharata, Lord Rāma, St Madhukavi, than St Sathagopa; St. Āndal than St Viśvan Chitta, her father; and so forth.

<sup>1</sup> அகாலதத மீடுபெதத சுடேசமயம்.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. (a) "Where I am, there also shall my minister be. If any man minister to me, him will my Father honour."

[John, XII, 26.]

(b) "And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me."

[John, XII, 32.]

<sup>3</sup> எத்திரிசுப்பசைகொண்டேயுமந்தமயம்.

எத்திரிசுப்பசைதமம். [4th T. Āndal, 19.]

33 Hence Amudanār in his immortal work Rāmānuja-niṭṭ-Andādi, sung daily by all the Vaiṣṇavas and in all the Viṣṇu Temples, testifies to Rāmānuja's greatness as Saviour of mankind, thus:—

' Our elders aver that God dwells in His Holy Shrines in heaven and on earth, but His Holiest Shrine is the Holy Heart of Rāmānuja. Hence we worship God by worshipping Rāmānuja, by resorting to Rāmānuja we shall have resorted to all the Holy Shrines."

34 Nadadūr Ammaḷ declared, that the way to salvation is not by works (*karma*), not by knowledge (*jñāna* or *gnosis*), not by devotion (*bhakti*), not by faith (*prapatti*), but by implicit trust placed in Rāmānuja, and this was the ultimate truth proclaimed to all by Amudanār in his R. N. Andādi, "

35 "Here are two Holy Names," Kūrṭṣa often said, "name'y, Nā-rā-ya-na and Rā-mā-nu-ja, each is made up of four syllables. But Nārāyaṇa as denoting God, can both save and damn, but Rāmānuja as Saviour, can only save. In this consists our stay, strength and safety

36 "Rāmānuja," exclaimed Amudanār, "it matters not where I am, hell or heaven, but let thy Beautiful Figure haunt me ever. To this bliss, I will forego even the Lord whom thou canst show upon thy hand " "Where those great souls, Rāmānuja's servants, dwell, that is my Empyrean " "Rāmānuja," said he addressing him directly, "My very bones may split in agony, but let me at all times and all places indulge in love for Thy servants " It is chronicled that so addressed, Rāmānuja looked on Amudanār with eyes beaming with benevolence and passed on. And Amudanār put a finish to his hymnal by the verse —" I seek Sri, the spouse of Ranga, that she may bless me with the bliss of crowning my head with

<sup>1</sup> *Op. cit.*, 106: " இருப்பிடம் கீ." "

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, 76 " விசுவநாதேந்திர கீ." and 45: " பேருருந்த மந்திரம். "

<sup>3</sup> கீ. B. N. Andādi, 106, கைவியக்களி.

<sup>4</sup> Du. 107, இன்புத்த.

the blooms of Rāmānuja's Feet—blooms of the plant of love growing in my heart."<sup>1</sup>

Lord Ranga declared: "Both Heaven and Earth are granted thee, Rāmānuja."<sup>2</sup>

37. One day St. Kulaśekhara's verse: *உத்தமமெல்லாம்* was being read. This meant that when Rāma left Ayodhya for the woods, the whole Ayodhya's kith and kin of Rāma accompanied him. But some one in the auditory objected: "They only accompanied a little way off and then returned. How then did this Saint say they accompanied with him throughout?" Rāmānuja answered: "When Lakshmana who said: "All services I shall do," followed, it is as if all followed, referring to himself thus.

Thus was the greatness of Rāmānuja.

<sup>1</sup> B. N. Anādi, 108, *சுந்தரம்*.

<sup>2</sup> Cp. Jesus saying:—"All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth" [Mat. XXVIII, 18.]

<sup>3</sup> "Aham sarvam kariṣyāmi." [Rām. II, 31, 35.] This is an indirect reference to himself.

## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

ANCIENT AUTHORITIES ON RĀMAṆUJA.

त्रादवगिरिमाहात्म्ये, पाञ्चरातेश्वरसंहितायाम् ॥ ३० ॥ अष्टाये ॥

श्रीनारायणः ॥ अस्तित्वेतिमलाभक्तिं भविष्यद्वन्दनम् । प्रथमशेषरूपीमे केदुर्धमक  
रोहिवान् ॥ ततस्तुजगदभोग्यभावाभावेतिवनिह । इत्यादीमपिमांयदुत्तमवद्वमईति ॥  
कलावपिपुणेभूयः कश्चित्वादिशेष्यम् । नानाविधैर्भोज्यै रर्चनैर्भोज्यै र्भोज्यै ॥

अन्यथ ॥ वादक्षगिरिमाहात्म्ये ॥ १. ३२ ॥

अनन्तप्रथमरूपं द्वितीयसदमस्तया । तृतीयंनलरायण कलौकाभिद्विष्याते ॥

हारीतस्मृतौ ॥ हारीतप्रतिभगवान् ॥ बहन्कालियुगोपासे धर्मेनष्टुतारिते । मदन-  
स्सर्वभक्ष तवगोब्रह्मपुत्रः ॥ ह्यपिरुमहाभाष्यमयकर्ताजितोन्निभः । तत्त्वसम्बन्धिनश्शिष्या  
ह्यसुराणामपिदुर्गमाध ॥ भाग्यशैवीवैतसेवैगमिष्यन्तिपरांगतिम् ॥

अकारदेवदरिकाधममाहृत्ये ॥ अभिसमागच्छतु पूर्णमहीनामीश्वरभक्तः । श्रीमानुज-  
रूपेण भविष्यति सतापुदे ॥ विमिश्रितैतदाह्वानप्रतिपादनतत्परः । भाष्यं विमिश्रितैवेदन्तमूलाणा-  
मस्ति वेदान्ततत्त्ववित् ॥ सदाश्रयस्तत्त्वान्नाशस्तान्निष्कस्तत्त्वदर्शिनः । वेदान्तद्वयतन्त्रज्ञाभिव्य-  
क्तिगुरुत्तमाः ।

मृतपूरीमाहृत्यये ॥ 3-104-5.

मदज्ञोयमहावीर्यरक्षोपाधरसीधरः । जगतामुपकारायतन्नेहैवविश्र्यति ॥

त्रयविंशते २९ म ॥ अयस्त्यातेभमस्तुतपोसातपुरोभः॥ त्वेदेविममदने  
पालितास्यापुनश्रुमः ॥ अनन्तगृहादीनामृष्टिनित्ययोगिनाम् ॥ अश्वेदूतामहाभागः जायते  
इमदावता॥ परावृत्तः कविभिर्प्रकृतैरुपास्योपनिः ॥ एतेषां भेषनहोमदृक्कास्तुनभिताः॥

श्रीषष्ठाध्याये ॥

श्रीरामोभगवान्पूर्वं तत्त्वार्थोपवधया । तथैवाहन्कलियुगे श्रीमान्ब्रह्मसदोक्तः ॥  
शालीवाहकव्यानां तत्त्वार्थमुच्यते । गतेन वस्तुतः श्रीमान्येते राजोऽजनिवितौ ॥

श्रीदिव्यसूत्रिचरिते १७ सर्गे ■

आद्वैतसमगतिचैत्रयासितस्पादाद्यत्वनहुतकृपारसेनकाशित । विस्तीर्णासितगुह्यस-  
ज्जनाभयत्वाऽक्षीराभानुजयकृतमध्यवापितायम् ॥

कुरेशः—सत्यं सत्यं पुनस्तस्यैवातिराजो जगद्गुरुः । स एव सर्वलोकानां स मुद्गर्तानसंख्यः ॥

# **APPROXIMATE DATES IN THE CHIEF EVENTS OF RĀMĀNUJA'S LIFE.**

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1.	Birth at Śrīperambādūr ...	A.C. 1017 (Śālivāhana Saka 939).
2.	Study with Yādaraprakāṣa ... ..	A.C. 1033
3.	First entry to Srirangam to see Ālavandār. ..	1042
4.	Taking holy orders ... ..	1049
5.	Flight to Mysore (under King Chōlā's persecution) ... ..	1096
6.	Conversion of Bitti-dera, the King of the Hoysala Country (Maisūr), and naming him Viṣṇu-vardhana ...	1098
7.	Installing Lord Śrī-Nārāyaṇa at Melukote. ..	1100
8.	Stay in this Country up to ... ..	1116
9.	Return to Śrīrangam ... ..	1118
10.	Finis to earthly career ... ..	1137

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Total length of life, years 120



### SUCCESSION LIST OF RÂMÂNUJÎYA ÂCHÂRYAS.

